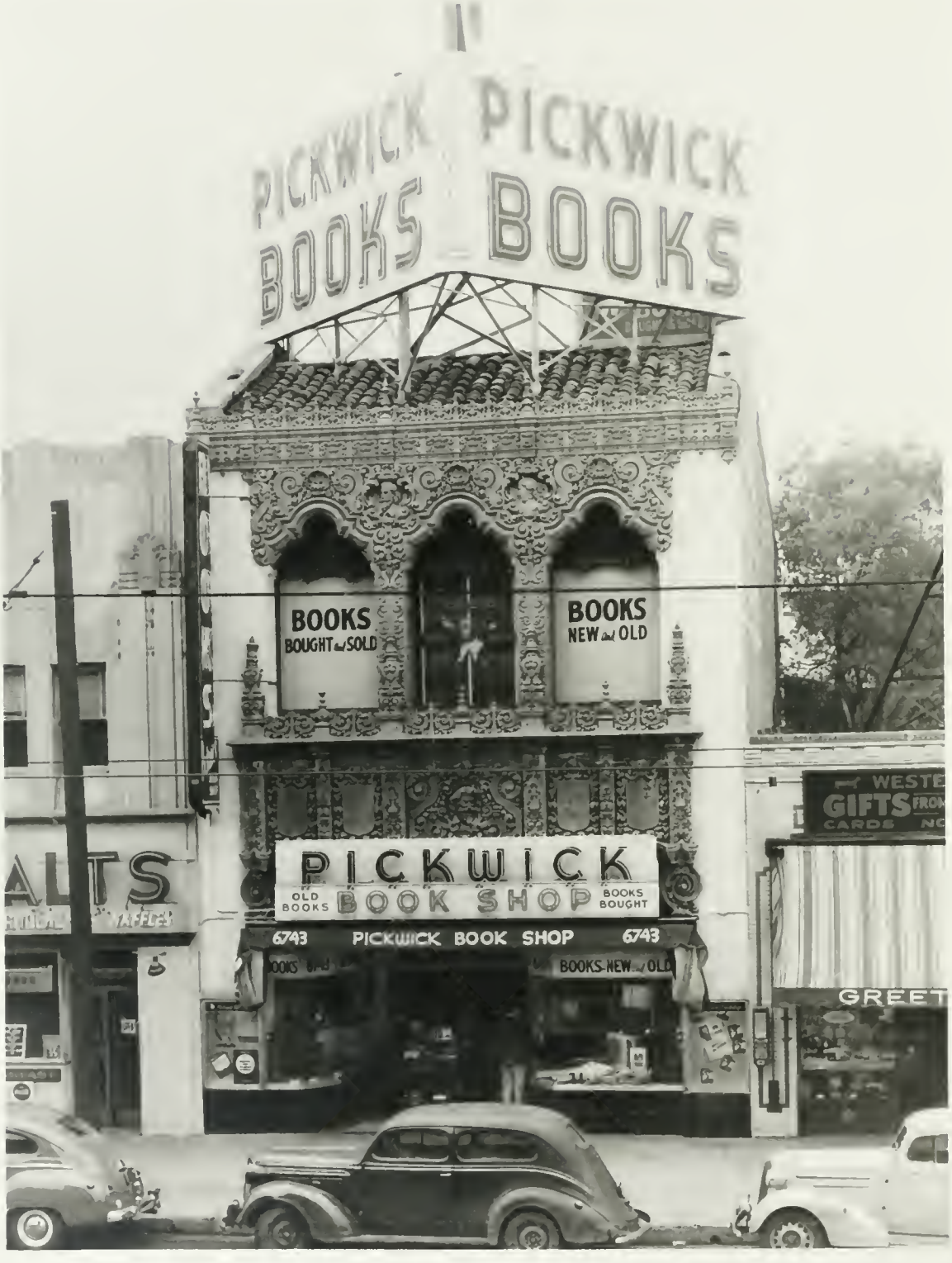
PICKWICK
BOOKS
PICKWICK
BOOKS
BOOKS
BOUGHT and SOLD
BOOKS
NEW and OLD
PICKWICK
OLD BOOKS
BOOK SHOP
BOOKS BOUGHT
6743 PICKWICK BOOK SHOP 6743
BOOKS NEW and OLD
GIFTS
GREET

THE WAY IT WAS: FIFTY YEARS IN THE SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA BOOK TRADE

Louis Epstein

Interviewed by Joel Gardner

VOLUME II

Completed under the auspices
of the
Oral History Program
University of California
Los Angeles

Copyright © 1977
The Regents of the University of California

This manuscript is hereby made available for research purposes only. All literary rights in the manuscript, including the right to publication, are reserved to the University Library of the University of California at Los Angeles. No part of the manuscript may be quoted for publication without the written permission of the University Librarian of the University of California at Los Angeles.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

VOLUME II

TAPE NUMBER: VIII, Side One (July 2, 1974). 344

A censorship case: Memoirs of Hecate County--Herman Mann arrested at Pickwick--Court proceedings--Appeal denied--Constitutional uncertainties--Censorship and the bookseller--Pornography--Political censorship--Pressure from left and right--Lecturing three young Birchers--Political philosophy--Los Angeles politics.

TAPE NUMBER: VIII, Side Two (July 2, 1974). 369

Paul Lamport--Opposing images of Hollywood Boulevard--An embezzlement cast--Other Pickwick employees: Herman Mann--Ben Latting--Lloyd Harkema--Bob Bennett and Dick Marshall--Robert Wettereau--A philosophy of numerous titles--Courtesy in the Pickwick--"Taking over the saloon."

TAPE NUMBER: IX, Side One (July 2, 1974). 394

Bookstore list--Bill Smith--The Martindales--Walter and Virginia Martindale--Lloyd Severe--Jewish-American Bookstore--Ver Brugge's--Lillian Deighton--Solomon's Bookstore--Harry Dale--Brentano's on Seventh Street--Joe Chevalier--Hollywood Bookstore--Harry Wepplo.

TAPE NUMBER: IX, Side Two (July 15, 1974). 418

Eugene Bechtold--Larson's--Brentano's--Western and eastern bookstores contrasted--Brentano's in Beverly Hills, 1974--Adco--De Vorss--C.U. Branch--Selling door-to-door--Peggy Christian--M. Harelick.

TAPE NUMBER: X, Side One (July 15, 1974). 442

Mel Royer--Acres of Books--Harry Levinson--Jack E. Reynolds--Max Hunley--Kurt Schwarz--Howard and Reese--The Perkinses--The Yales--The Needhams.

TAPE NUMBER: X, Side Two (July 15, 1974). 466

An attempt to unionize Pickwick--Disagreement with Wilbur Needham--Politics in Hollywood--The Larry Edmunds Bookshop--Milton Luboviski--Antiquarian booksellers--Walter Neuman--The Briers--Arthur H. Clark--Karl Zamboni--Phil and Helen Brown--John Cole--Abbey updated: Juan Pináns--Nick Kovach.

TAPE NUMBER: XI, Side One (July 29, 1974). 491

Antiquarians--Nick Kovach--Cambridge Bookshop--Lee Freeson--Larson's--Kurt Melander--Roman Novins--Mel Royer--Founding of the Southern California chapter of the Antiquarian Booksellers Association--Standards of membership--Value of membership--Interchange of knowledge--Leaving and reentering the chapter--Cherokee Book Shop.

TAPE NUMBER: XI, Side Two (July 29, 1974). 515

Involving Jewish booksellers in the United Jewish Welfare Fund--Outside activities of booksellers--Heritage Book Shop--Theodore Front--Marian Gore--Publishers' representatives--Role of the salesman--James D. Blake--Importance of backlist to new-book seller--Louis Friedman--Harrison Leusler--Carl Smalley--Ray Healy--Jess Carmack--Ellis Baker.

TAPE NUMBER: XII, Side One (July 29, 1974). 540

Salesmen: Charlie Johnson--Denny Chase--Raymar--Erret Stuart--Bob Cohen--The Nourses--"Second-generation" salesmen.

TAPE NUMBER: XII, Side Two (August 13, 1974). 562

Southern California Booksellers Association--"Cavalcade of Books"--The organization today--Publisher-bookseller relations--First officers--Involvement with American Booksellers Association--Growth of ABA in the sixties--Purpose of ABA--Criticism by new members--Current situation.

TAPE NUMBER: XIII, Side One (August 13, 1974). 586

Dick Noyes--Duties of ABA president--Changing goals of ABA--"Mr. Pickwick" column--Aaron Epstein's contribution to Pickwick--Branching out--A digression on Kaspare Cohn--The first branch, Topanga Plaza--Negotiating with May Company--Further expansion--Dayton-Hudson offers to buy Pickwick.

TAPE NUMBER XIII, Side Two (August 13, 1974). 611

Dayton-Hudson's approach to Pickwick--Background of Dayton-Hudson--Dayton-Hudson and bookstores--Decision to sell--Trend towards dehumanization of the book trade--Proliferation of chains--Changing nature of stores--Future of Louis Epstein.

Index. 636

TAPE NUMBER: VIII, SIDE ONE

JULY 2, 1974

GARDNER: I thought we'd start out this time talking about [Memoirs of] Hecate County and that whole story.

EPSTEIN: In 1947, the book by Edmund Wilson came out, as everyone knows. It was a fairly dull book for the people who ever read it through. But it had two or three pages in which he gave some fairly intimate descriptions of a sexual act. Things were not quite as open then as they are today. Considerable opposition to the sale of it came up from various organizations--not necessarily organizations, but individuals, powerful individuals, one of them, Randolph Hearst, who was at all times at odds with Edmund Wilson, the author, for some of the things Hearst claimed Wilson did and Wilson claimed Hearst said. So I personally believe, and I've had it verified by [someone] who knew some of the background of their controversy, that it was strictly a hatchet job by Mr. Hearst and his editors for the pleasure of Hearst. At any rate, the situation came to a head in several places in the United States--New York City and, I believe, somewhere in the Midwest and in Los Angeles. The book was in stock in every bookstore in the United States, and no one considered it a bad book. It got the usual literary credits, but it had no particular sale until it started being attacked. Then, of course, people wanted to read it, wanted to know what all the

hullabaloo was about, and it was a tremendous disappointment to 99 percent of the people who bought the book. Edmund Wilson is not the easiest person to read--by no means.

The book, as I said, was on sale in all bookstores. In this city it was in every department store and in every bookstore that carried new books. The wholesalers had it, and it was being openly offered by everyone. And we had no problems with it until this campaign started. Well, one day--I recollect it was about the middle of the summer--a troop of policemen walked in. They knew we had the book because one of their detectives had come and bought a copy the day before. Well, they followed it up the next day, and they grabbed all the copies of Hecate County, and they arrested one of our employees, Herman Mann--about as innocent a person as ever lived. (Poor Herman has since died. He left a fine record in the book business, having worked in Brooklyn at Abraham and Straus and also, locally, at Bullock's. And he used to meet customers from Abraham and Straus who now lived here or visited here; they'd recognize each other. That is another story.) Well, they arrested Herman. They took him to jail, and we eventually bailed him out. At the time of the arrest I protested, "Well, why do you arrest him? He only works here." "Well," he says, "it's a corporation." They couldn't arrest me--I was president of the corporation--because the corporate

thing, you cannot be arrested and put in jail. "I personally didn't sell the book," I said, "but I'm responsible for having it here." Well, that isn't the way the law worked. The trial, of course, came up some months later. We tried to get onto the stand witnesses to show that the book was a good piece of literary writing, and the prurient scene was incidental to the story and didn't go on and on offering scenes such as that throughout the book as straight, dull pornography does. But, no, the judge at the time wouldn't hear anything of it.

GARDNER: Do you recall who the judge was?

EPSTEIN: It may be in the story. [looks at newspaper] This is the appeal. At any rate, Judge [Mildred L.] Lillie heard the appeal. I don't recall the man's name. It'll probably come back to me a little later. He was an obstinate old fool, and I think he was playing to the grandstand of Hearst--who, of course, was watching every move and making comments at the time. We lost the case. [phone rings; tape stopped] The corporation was convicted, and Herman was convicted, but he was let off with a minor fine. The publisher of the book, Doubleday and Company, furnished our defense counsel. They were very, very nice about it.

GARDNER: Who were your attorneys?

EPSTEIN: Our attorney was--the judge's name was [Arthur S.] Guerin. (I work backwards.) Ray Stansberry was the attorney, and Guerin was the original judge. And then the

case was appealed, and it later came before Judge Lillie, who is now, I think, in the superior court or appellate, I believe. But Guerin was a pompous sort of a guy, and he wouldn't listen to any defense at all. He actually practically told the jury that we were guilty from the start. The attorney, Stansberry--the judge ordered that the whole book be read in front of the jury, and Mrs. Stansberry sat there for three days reading that darn thing. But because of the pressure of the Times and the pressure of the Examiner and the judge's conduct in court, we were lost from the beginning.

And the law at that time was very unclear, anyway, that you could be arrested for almost anything if anyone wanted to complain that it was obscene. It was surprising to me that more books didn't come under that, except perhaps the prosecutors were too busy to do anything about those things except when somebody influential in the community raised an issue for whatever reason. Very often such issues were raised in communities for political purposes so somebody can get publicity out of it, that he is the savior of the youth of America. Of course, people like that are always suspect in my mind.

It went up on appeal, and unfortunately Judge Lillie, because of the law as it stood, could do nothing about reversing the case. Judge Lillie and I have met on many occasions since, and we always have a laugh about it. She

maintains that she always regretted that she had to rule against us, but there was no way she could possibly rule any other way at that time. The U.S. Supreme Court had never clarified that point. It wasn't until later that they had such a thing as "without any literary value" or "without any social import" as part of the definition. And I notice now they've even changed it again to make it even more uncertain as to what is and what isn't. They leave it to every community to decide for themselves, and so the poor bookseller--well, such as the Pickwick, who had thirty branches all the way from Bakersfield to Hollywood--which community is he going to put a book in? And how is he going to be protected from being arrested in Bakersfield and not arrested in San Diego and maybe arrested again in Fresno and not arrested in Hollywood?

GARDNER: And the ordering's all done from Minneapolis.

EPSTEIN: Right. And the ordering is done from Minneapolis. It's an impossible situation. I can't understand the thinking of supposedly nine wise men in the Supreme Court making a decision like that. Well, the wise men were against the decision. If I may go political, I think it's the Nixon appointees who are out to save the world from pornography--well, I won't comment any further on Nixon.

GARDNER: Oh, feel free.

EPSTEIN: If his Supreme Court appointees are no more

honest in their thinking than his other appointees in his own office, I fear for the United States. This is actually true, in my mind. It's such a great danger that the Supreme Court has all that power to declare things constitutional or unconstitutional. If they don't think straight, the country's in grave danger. If they're following their appointer because of his principles, then they're not lawyers for the United States; they're lawyers for him.

At any rate, that's the story of Hecate County.

GARDNER: Well, what happened finally?

EPSTEIN: Well, finally the penalties were paid, and business went on as usual. The book was withdrawn from circulation. Of course, it's now on every paperback-book shelf. It's never been acclaimed as a literary success. It was quietly laying its own egg, and it should have been allowed to do so. If it wasn't for Mr. Hearst, it probably would have. It would have gone down in literary circles as a novel written by Edmund Wilson, appeared in bibliographies; and scholars would have said that he did it, and nobody would have understood what he was talking about anyway. But that is what happens very often when the cudgels are taken up for saving the human race.

GARDNER: Can you think of any reason in particular why Pickwick was chosen?

EPSTEIN: It was not only Pickwick. Actually, I should

have mentioned--this has always rankled me--that in view of the fact that every department store had it and all the stores in the country, that two stores were picked out. Not only Pickwick--there was a little tiny store on West Sixth Street that was being operated by Harry Wepplo. I think it's Lofland's old store. When Lofland retired, somebody bought him out. And then Harry Wepplo was helping him, and then they started taking in new books. It was originally an old-book store. But poor Harry was also tried, he and Herman Mann. Curiously, they're both very short, tiny people, both very mild-mannered. Herman was more mild-mannered. Harry later opened a bookstore in Farmer's Market. But those were the only two stores.

GARDNER: Any reason?

EPSTEIN: Department stores were not touched. Of course, the reason given was, well, the department stores at that time were very heavy advertisers in the Examiner. So if Hearst was behind it, he would protect them. But it was pointed out to the court that only two stores out of dozens [were affected]. Well, of course, the comment is that you don't have to arrest every criminal. There's no defense that other people committing the same crime have not been arrested. Very often it's impossible to arrest every one of them--which is perfectly legal; I can understand that. But nevertheless it's curious that the Pickwick, which of course was right in the heart of Hollywood, the

City of Sin--so-called--and the other was downtown, a little secondhand bookstore. I don't know what they were trying to prove by arresting him. I can understand the psychology of arresting the Pickwick in the midst of the City of Sin, but I can't see the psychology of the law officers--unless they were going to arrest everybody in blanket fashion--that they would pick on poor Harry Wepplo.

GARDNER: Did he have to pay the same fine?

EPSTEIN: Oh, yes, the fine was nominal. As I say, the defense was provided by Doubleday and Company, the publishers of the book, so we were not out financially except the horror of going down to court for days and days and days at a time and living through the agony of being accused of selling a pornographic book which is no more pornographic than thousands and millions of other things. Well, that's pretty much the story of Hecate County. We got a lot of good press from some of the more liberal papers, and of course the literary community in Los Angeles was all stirred up for two reasons: number one, why the arrest was made; and number two, why the defense was not allowed to testify that this book was not offensive to the public, that the public could read it and not be offended at all. Well, no such defense was to be allowed, only the reading of it, and the jury had to make up its own mind. It was a little bit of a stir at the time.

GARDNER: Did the [American] Civil Liberties Union come into it at any point?

EPSTEIN: No, they did not appear. They did not appear on the scene. None of the public organizations appeared. And I don't think it was absolutely necessary for them to do so at the time. We had sufficient legal counsel, and we were getting good publicity out of our side of the story--except, of course, from the Hearst papers, which continued the attack at all times.

GARDNER: What about other censorship cases in the course of your career?

EPSTEIN: Well, surprisingly, with the exception of hard-core pornography, which bookstores don't handle--it's handled by a different type of person; it never appears in regular bookstores. . . . (Well, I won't say "never"; I'm sure that there are some small booksellers who might have a few of those things under the counter or in a drawer of his desk. There's no question about that. But the regular bookseller never really bothered with that.) Most of those things are or were sold either by peddlers or by some newsstands in certain parts of the area. It's an underground thing. It was not part of the regular trade. I recollect in the old, old days when I was still early in the used-book business, early in my career, there were people who would come from the East and carry--in their

cars or however--pornographic books, Fanny Hill and such as that. And they would come to offer them to the used-book sellers, and, I suppose, to the new-book sellers, too. And if a person had one or two people who were very anxious to find a copy, very often we would buy one. There's no question about it. And we would sell a piece of pornography from time to time, but we were very, very careful and circumspect about it. We didn't believe in censorship even then. But we knew what would happen to us if we broke the rules. And curiously, the people who were buyers of erotica in those days were not little schoolkids. They were not tramps. They were substantial people in the community. We had one man who was a major officer in a major bank who was collecting pornography. And during the course of my career I sold him several pieces of pornography. He was a fine, substantial citizen. He raised a fine family and a very literary family. Not only did he buy pornography, but he bought other things, too. It wasn't a question of his mind being preoccupied with it. Women would buy--at least half of the customers for pornography were female.

GARDNER: Is that so?

EPSTEIN: Oh, yes. To this day the saying is that if it were not for the female public, most of the so-called erotic novels being circulated today probably wouldn't make the grade. I'm not a psychologist, and I won't go into the

psychological reasons for it; but that's what they say, and from my own experience, women buy most of that type of novel. When you come back to this pornography business, it's been going on since time immemorial. I have reprints at home now--I ran across a number of the Bohn Library editions. I don't know if you're familiar with them, but they republished the early classics from Pliny's Natural History to Procopius and any number of the early Greek and Latin writers; and even in those days they had what they called erotic literature. Very well known. And they're still being reprinted today. But you see, when they reprint one of those, when they reprint Johannes Secundus, they reprint it as a literary classic. Of course, they use a different type of language, and they approach the problem in a different way, but the intent is there. Maybe they might have been a little bit more literary in their day. I ran across about a half a dozen of those classics. I have them right here in the next room.

GARDNER: We'll have to read from them.

EPSTEIN: Well, you'll have to do the reading from them. [laughter]

GARDNER: But there were no other major censorship cases that affected Los Angeles?

EPSTEIN: Those few cases that did appear when a person was arrested were not really, in a sense, a censorship case as Hecate County. There was really no defense for

them at that time. Now they have defended Fanny Hill and found it innocent. Whether Fanny Hill being tried today under the new Supreme Court ruling would come off scot free or not, I don't know.

GARDNER: It's impossible to say.

EPSTEIN: It's possible that some community, if you apply strictly community standards--for instance, a copy was sold, say, in an Amish village in Pennsylvania and they had a jury of that type. Or we could name quite a few communities where a thing like that might happen. The book was sold everywhere in the country, and this particular county, because of the nature of the citizens and their beliefs, it might be found to be offensive to them. And that is apparently the only rule.

GARDNER: As a bookseller, what are your feelings about censorship?

EPSTEIN: My feelings about censorship is that they serve no purpose, never have, and never will. Censorship has never eliminated pornography. Censorship of conduct has never eliminated bad conduct. Censorship of almost anything has never eliminated the thing that it wanted to censor. I think history will bear that out. People were burned for witchcraft, and there's just as much so-called witchcraft today as there ever was. People were prosecuted for writing pornography, and as long as there are men to write, pornography will be written. And as long as there

are people living, they will want to read pornography. I had an instance. Well, when the new wave of the so-called pornographic novels came out, there was considerable criticism by some people, and a great many of our customers were very much upset because we sold that type of thing. Now, for instance, when everybody started selling the Fanny Hill--we'll use that as the classic example--we were severely criticized for selling it. And we had to defend ourselves to some of our customers who believed that because it had had such a bad reputation that it should continue to have it and not be sold except whichever way it had been circulated.

One man wrote to me, a customer of many years' standing, and I answered him. He complained about this thing being offered to young people and so forth, that it would hurt their morals and all that. And I explained to him in my own way. What his reaction to my letter was after he got it, I'll never know, because I never heard from him again. Whether he continued to be a customer of the shop or not, I don't know either, because I didn't know him personally. But at any rate, I wrote and told him that in the history of censorship, censorship has never been effective, and in spite of censorship, people who want to read those things usually find them and can find them. They've never been unavailable in the total sense. He made some remark about children reading it; and I told him that I

had read pornography, and I'm positive my children have read pornography, and I'm sure that their children are going to read pornography, and that we do not consider ourselves an unusual family in that sense, nor a family that lacks morals. It's just a natural curiosity. And I don't think it will affect any one of us in any particular way, morally--or psychologically, for that matter. I remarked to him what my children were doing, that one was a scientist with his doctorate and doing research work, and that the other son was in business with me doing very well at that. And we enjoy an excellent reputation in the community. Now, what effect that letter had on the person, I don't know. But I've always defended it.

There are various kinds of censorship. There was the censorship of the McCarthy era and the censorship of the Birchers, the America Firsters; and there is the censorship attempted, many attempts at censorship, even by the extreme left in Hollywood during their heyday when they were very powerful. Here, again, I don't want to go into a discussion of politics, but these are facts that these things have happened, and they happened to me: that a Bircher would come in and see two books, one alongside the other; and he would take the book he didn't like and he would throw it at me and say, "Why the hell do you carry that old book, that Communist book? Close my account." Well, okay. If he would listen to me, I would try to

explain to him that a bookstore cannot censor the public's thinking. It cannot censor a writer's writing. A bookstore is a place where the community can find an exchange of ideas. If you've got a better idea, you write it. Publish it. We'll sell it. But you've got to give each a chance for the public to make up its own mind. That's my theory of what a bookstore of our type was. I can imagine a bookstore that's run as a little personal shoppe by a person who likes to sell the books he likes. I agree. He has a right--and a duty, perhaps in his own mind--to sell only the things he likes and the ideas he likes to propagate. But a general community bookstore such as the Pickwick stores have always been, I don't think has a right to do that. And I have been taken to task for selling anti-Semitic books by the same organization to which I have made contributions--and still do, over many, many years--for fighting anti-Semitism. And I have to explain to them that the book that they were complaining about was definitely anti-Semitic, that I got no pleasure out of selling that book, but as a community bookstore, I felt it was proper--not only proper, but almost necessary--for me to stock that book. It certainly wasn't for the fact that I might want to make a few extra dollars out of that particular book, because it never did sell that well. The amount of money involved was minimal.

GARDNER: What book?

EPSTEIN: There again, I can't flick it off my memory right like that. I'll think of it. [Iron Curtain Over America by John Beatty] And I explained to Mr. [Milton] Senn, who was at that time with the Anti-Defamation League--poor chap, he just recently died--that in my mind it would be better if a person who wants this particular book would come into a store like ours and buy it and see other books that might be more enlightening than to go to that character who had bookstores, Smith, that preacher . . .

GARDNER: Gerald L.K. Smith.

EPSTEIN: . . . Gerald L.K. Smith's store and find nothing but anti-Semitic literature in there. And that gave it a sense of proportion. Well, he didn't particularly follow my theory, but I convinced him that he had no right to complain about me selling that book because in my position I could not exercise a censorship of what I would think would be the community thinking.

The surprising thing about censorship is that men who are very human in every other respect, and would complain about censorship no end, and fight to their death practically would come in and say, "Louis, why do you handle this fascist book?" And they'd take the book and literally throw it out, throw it either at me or at the counter. I mean, they wouldn't make any attempt to hurt me. And they were people that I knew, who had been customers of mine for many years. And I would say to them frankly, "Look,

you SOB, if you want to be a censor, get the hell out of here." Some of them I knew well enough to talk to like that. I said, "You have no right to complain because I sell that book. I sell the books you like, too, don't I?"

During the height of that type of thinking we had many cases. One particular case I may have mentioned is where a group of three youngsters came in. They were Birch Society supporters. And a certain paperback came out against the Birchers--I can't recollect its name now--and they were incensed over the fact that various stores were handling it. And so a group of three youngsters came to me. . . . Oh, Birchers are fantastic letter writers. They're threateners. Most of the time they won't sign their name. Anyone who sent me a letter with their name signed to it, I personally answered it, explaining my position. Once in a while I got a nice letter back telling me, well, it's very clear thinking but they still didn't agree. Anyway, they were by no means fair about it. Well, this group of three youngsters came in, and they complained about that particular book. And they explained to me that they had already visited the wholesale house for paperbacks and that they were going to drop it because of the pressure of Birch. They had visited the May Company, and May Company was going to drop it. They visited another department store, and they were going to drop it. Department stores are extremely sensitive to any type of criticism. As

regards that, they have no backbone whatsoever. I mean, if they want to sell something, there's no reason why they should be pushed into a corner by some group or this group or that group. At any rate, the youngsters came in and explained all that to me, that they had succeeded in doing all this and would I do the same. I said, "No, I will not do the same." And then I proceeded to give the three of them a long lecture of why I would not do the same, why our store could not do the same, and why I personally thought that they were totally mistaken in asking me to do the same. I explained to them the principles of freedom of speech and that we were handling two or three books that came out at the time which were Birch books--very severely criticized by the other side for handling them--and that there's no reason that they should not take their chances in the marketplace of ideas, as any other idea. If you've got a better idea, then people will follow it. And I explained to them of the censorship cases that had happened in the early days of the formation of the country. I explained to them of the article about free speech. I think I left an impression with those youngsters. I could see the attitude on their face was not as antagonistic and aggressive and holy as it was when they walked in. And to their credit, they politely thanked me for listening to them, and I thanked them for listening to me. I said, "You boys are young, and you should study this issue to a degree greater,

perhaps, than has been called to your attention. If the censorship could work both ways--if the extreme left were. . . ." The fact that they themselves were able to publish their books in which they say there's a conspiracy against them; the conspiracy has never bothered to censor them. Why should they act in reverse?

Anyway, I must have given a good talk, because I know that several of my clerks had gathered around to listen all through this. They said, "Mr. E, that was a damn good talk." I was very serious about the issue. I thought to express myself to youngsters. I gave them a good deal more time than I might have to an older person who might have wanted to give me an argument. But meet those three youngsters on the street, and you'd take them for just average, good American youngsters. They had been sold on the idea that the country was being run by Communists for Communists and nothing but Communists, all the way up to the top. At that particular stage, I don't think the liberal community was that strong.

GARDNER: We haven't talked about your political affiliations at all.

EPSTEIN: I don't have any political affiliations in the sense that I am a straight party man. I register as a Democrat, but I would just as often vote for a good Republican if I think he's a better person. I think the party labels are in many instances misleading. And I think a

party label will very often push a good man into doing bad things really against his own good thinking because he feels he has a certain loyalty to a party. If our two-party system was that strong in this country, it would have to be subject to more criticism in Congress on a party basis. We would have to adopt the British type of rule. If they lost a vote of confidence, they were out. Under our system, which does not provide for that, in some ways it works at a disadvantage. Of course, no one can gainsay that our government has probably stood the test of time as well as any government in Europe. It doesn't always work out the best, but on the whole I guess it is the best. But I think too many people are befogged by party labels. I don't agree with that.

GARDNER: So you've never been active for one party or another?

EPSTEIN: I've never been active. I've sent money to candidates. I suppose you would call me a supporter of liberal candidates. By the same token, I can criticize a liberal candidate if he's a weak person. After he gets elected and doesn't get the job done, there's no reason to reelect him because he happens to have a liberal label. A lot of liberals, I think, are not self-critical about the representatives we send to certain elected institutions. The tendency of a label is to make everybody run as a bunch of sheep and to follow the label rather than

their good sense. I take my liberality with a large grain of salt, knowing the liberals are just as human as nonliberals. Morally, I think [that] they're probably not any better. Their standards initially might be higher, but I think they're just as liable to temptation as anyone else. And I'm old enough to know that people are tempted at certain times in their lives, certain situations, either by actual money or by power or by glory or by the success syndrome.

I totally believe that human nature being what it is, we will never have a perfect government. There's no such thing as a perfect government. I can't conceive of it, and I don't think anyone else can. It can't be achieved by party labels. It can only be achieved by individuals. And I think a good individual, no matter what his party, in a powerful office can exert more good than the party can: a strong man who lives by principle, who knows what is good and then tries to attain that good. And I think about as close to a person as I can think of is--and I still call him Governor Warren--Chief Justice [Earl] Warren. Not that everything he did necessarily was of the best, but of a person with a party label, supposedly Republican, I think his theory of justice, his theory of government, is closest to my way of thinking than any other before or since. On the other hand, I think

a [Franklin D.] Roosevelt served a purpose at the time, but I think he served too long. I think the country would have been far better off if he had not been elected the last time.

I think a lot of politicians happened to get into situations, a lot of presidents got into situations over which they had no control, and suffered because the events were such that they overwhelmed the country and they overwhelmed the man--like the Depression. [Herbert] Hoover was a good man. I think he might have been an excellent president. But I think he just came in at an inopportune time for himself. No man at that time could have done well--let's put it that way.

My politics are very simple. I have friends who get all excited about elections, and I sometimes get excited about elections. There are certain people I would hate to see in office, and there are some in office now who I hate to see there. But on the other hand, look, they were elected by the populace, and the populace will eventually become disillusioned with them. These are the risks we have to take in a popular form of government, in a democratic form of government, a republican form of government.

GARDNER: We have a little bit left on the tape, so I'll follow this line before we go into something else. What about local community politicians, people like city

councilmen that you've had to deal with?

EPSTEIN: Well, we've had some good men, some very poor men. I think we have a good man in office right now [Mayor Tom Bradley]. His predecessor, I never did like. He was a snide person.

GARDNER: You're speaking of [Sam] Yorty.

EPSTEIN: Yes. He attempted to degrade everyone who was against him. He had a way of remarking about people which was devious in a sense that he would say something which was not of itself bad, but which you knew that he meant to say for a denigrating purpose. I think one of my pet peeves has been the Dodger Stadium affair. You know, for that reason I've never been to Dodger Stadium, even though I've been invited to go free. People have offered the tickets to go there, and I just won't go. Now, whether I'll continue to be that obstinate, I don't know. But I think that was a scandal that should have been dug out and dug up. In my own mind I'm convinced Norris Poulson probably might have been--I'm not sure that he was paid off, but he later admitted that there was quite a bit of hanky-panky going on. Those were the exact terms that he used. But he was determined to get a baseball team for Los Angeles at any cost. Well, the stupid person--in my mind he was stupid. I think the Dodger people were so anxious to get out of Brooklyn that they would have given anything to come here, that we did not have to give them a ball park

and build roads for them and give them all that very valuable land. If it could be used for a ball park, the city could have used it for recreation for its own citizens, if not for other things. Now, they need land for this thing, they need land for that thing--for storage warehouses and one thing and another--and the city has to go out and pay millions of dollars for land. And here they gave them excellent land. Of course, it might have cost money for the city to grade it and that, but they did spend the money anyway. You know, when they say that the city spent x number of dollars, I estimate in my own mind that whatever figure they use as x, the total expense was probably 5x, because of all the necessary things they did for preparation--the boulevards they built to get to the ball park, the offramps that they made. Well, fine, it's necessary. But if somebody comes in and wants to do it as a private enterprise, what is the city getting out of it? He has a very successful operation, but the city gets nothing out of it. They've got a little bit of playground, I think; and then one other piece of ground that was promised to the city, I don't know whether they ever gave it or not. My memory fails me on all the details. That's one of my pet peeves. [tape stopped]

GARDNER: What about local councilmen and so forth with whom you've had to work around Hollywood? Was any of them good, bad?

EPSTEIN: Well, actually, we've never had to work very much with our local councilmen. They don't affect our busness in any particular way, except the only one who tried to actually get into the hair of our business was a man we knew very well, a neighbor of ours who had a building across the street--he had the medical building just on the opposite side of the street from where we were--whom we considered quite a good friend and whom we supported with money in his campaign--Paul Lamport. The first thing when he got in, he wanted to make a Park Avenue out of Hollywood Boulevard. And he wanted to get fine stores and fine hotels. So he immediately started a campaign against secondhand bookstores or bookstores or anything that didn't suit his conception.

TAPE NUMBER: VIII, SIDE TWO

JULY 2, 1974

EPSTEIN: Paul, whom I knew quite well and Aaron knew quite well (we worked together on various projects for the community, chamber of commerce and whatnot), turned out to be a very self-seeking person. He had this medical building; he wanted to advance his property--which we all do. We owned property on Hollywood Boulevard, too, at that time. But he, as I said, thought to make it a Park Avenue or Fifth Avenue, New York. He missed the boat by forty-five years. He immediately started a campaign against Pickwick Bookshop having their display on the outside of the shop, which had been there for thirty-some-odd years and nobody complained about it. And he picked out several shops that were--in the way of drawing people to Hollywood Boulevard--some of the leading shops that there are. The Wax Museum, which happened to be in the block where his building is, he attacked very much. And the building was owned by a Matt Silvers, who helped support Hollywood for many, many years before Paul came into the picture. Paul, I think, was an opportunist. Well, he was a crony of Yorty. Yorty put him up for council, and he was elected. And immediately on his election he started throwing his weight around. But fortunately he was defeated the first time around. He antagonized everyone whom

he had to work with, because he wanted to impose only his ideas. He antagonized a lot of property owners around there. He was going to tell them what was to be built on their street and what not. The people living on North Curson, which ends in a small canyon: he was all for opening up that little canyon for building. It was totally unsuited, the street. Curson is comparatively narrow, and he antagonized half of the Hollywood community. At any rate, there was an example of a man who had no business in politics. He never should have been elected. All he saw in politics was to gain ends that would be beneficial to him and to people around him. That is the kind of local politics that I will fight against. Most of the time, we take a moderate view of the man who is our councilperson.

GARDNER: And have very little dealings with him?

EPSTEIN: No, except as supporters of the chamber of commerce when we were in business and other community things that we were involved with then. I never directly, through the chamber of commerce's executive secretary, would have to approach them, and we became acquainted with them. As our business grew, we were considered major people in the community of business on Hollywood Boulevard, so they would come to visit us, just to be introduced and leave an idea that they thought might happen, sometimes to talk over something. We always stated our politics. I don't consider it politics: we stated our position clearly to them,

and if we liked it, we backed it up with maybe a few dollars from time to time when it needed it. If it was a candidate that we thought was admirable, we helped with money--which is as I think every good citizen would and should, considering that costs of campaigns are so fantastically high now. Everybody seems to think that the more money they spend, the more successful they will be in their election. I can assume that some money is absolutely necessary now with the days of widespread communication.

GARDNER: You mentioned before a case having to do with embezzlement.

EPSTEIN: Well, that was a purely almost personal thing as to the Pickwick. We had a bookkeeper who just took advantage of our lack of following our own rules, a disregard of our own rules. The chap's name was Joe Berman. We hired him as a bookkeeper, and we thought he was an excellent bookkeeper. He was very willing to do whatever we asked of him, had figures ready for us whenever we wanted them. He was very pleasant, and we got very well acquainted. We'd eat together two or three times a week, eat our lunches together. But here again, if you don't know a person's background, you really can be seriously hurt. The people whom we inquired of when we hired him, where he worked before, gave him an excellent recommendation. But we learned later why. At any rate, one January fifth

or sixth or seventh--I don't know the exact date; he used to come in early to open the store and go to the safe and count the money and so forth--he wasn't there. We looked where the money was supposed to be, and it wasn't there. And we started looking around for other things, and they weren't there. At any rate, we discovered that the man took off with a woman--although he had a wife and a number of children--and that by the best of our accounting he absconded with about $35,000 in cash. And he did it this way: during the Christmas rush, we were all so eager to work hard and make sales, we neglected to watch our bank balances and bank deposits. He would deposit the checks, but not the cash. Well, between about the fifteenth or twentieth of December and fifth of January, a lot of actual cash comes through that cash drawer, and that's what he took. Then he destroyed all the cash records and things like that. The actual amount probably might have been higher except we had no other way to check the accounts absolutely. We had our cash register tapes, and we had our checks, and we took the difference between. But there are other areas which he could have gotten. Then we found that he had made entries in the books previously. He was a very clever guy--he did it very cleverly--but he was eventually caught. We had a hell of a time proving a case against him. It was only because I had kept a daily record that he gave me each day during the course of the

Christmas business, comparing Christmas day by day to the year previous. And he would give it to me on little yellow slips the size of a three-by-five card, which at the end, when they got the final results for the year, I should have thrown away. But for some reason or other, I threw those daily slips into [a drawer]. I must have been changing clothes and I needed a new handkerchief; these might have been in my back pocket. I just threw them down, and they got into that drawer. And I discovered those slips six months later during the time when our case looked very doubtful and the district attorney told us it was doubtful. He almost was on the point of dropping it.

GARDNER: Why was it doubtful?

EPSTEIN: Because bookkeeping cases are extremely hard to prove to a jury. We had no original records. He destroyed them. All we had was the cash-register tape and our bank deposits. He didn't think that the jury would go for that. But when I discovered those slips in his handwriting, in which he said, "This is what we took in," then it verified the cash-register tapes. They could say somebody could run a tape off, set the register to run a tape off, which he was trying to say. So when I found that, I called the prosecuting attorney and I told him what I found. He said, "Bring those down right away. [claps hands] This clinches our case." And sure enough, it did. Oh, they tried every

which way. He tried to say that Stackhouse--our manager--and I kept a duplicate set of books for tax purposes to cheat the income tax people, tried to say that Stack and I stole the money. There wasn't a thing that he wouldn't try to do, but of course, he was very evasive on the stand. Well, he was convicted. And he appealed the case, and he was in jail because he couldn't raise bond. Well, somebody furnished bond for him. And while he was out on appeal, he got another job and did the same damn thing. He's never been found since. He ran off. When he knew that his trail was getting warm, he ran off.

GARDNER: That's incredible.

EPSTEIN: That is incredible. They've never found him. A very smooth talker and a very likable guy. He'll do anything for you.

GARDNER: Were there any tidbits like this that happened with other bookshops around town?

EPSTEIN: Oh, we've had dishonest employees who've gotten away with $1,000, $1,200--branch managers. Yes, those things have happened to other shops. It happens in every type of business. Sometimes a good man, for some reason of pressure or something, will go sour all of a sudden, and he'll almost compel himself to do something--not because he wants to, but because he feels he needs the money to defend himself against something or whatever purposes. Human nature's a peculiar thing. Many good people are very

often forced into situations in which they have no control over their actions. They really don't want to do it; they know it's wrong; they don't want to do it. But they feel compelled to do it. Maybe they get in a bad social circumstance in which money might buy them out or give them temporary relief. Sometimes they do something wrong and are blackmailed into various things. I think most crimes are committed--that type of crime--because the money's right there in front of them; and they just think, well, they'll outsmart the other person. And many of them just take the money and run--without a plan. This man had a plan, and we've had other bookkeepers who've gotten away with minor amounts of money. But when you meet them later and ask them, "Why do you do it?" (It just happened to me.) "Well, I needed some money." I said, "Well, what did you need it for? Why didn't you ask me for some money? You know my door's always been open for a hundred, two hundred sometimes, when one of my employees gets in a jam--or even more." But, well, he felt it wouldn't be the right thing or he didn't want to confide in me or whatever. That's the type of thing that happens.

GARDNER: Maybe this would be a good point to talk in a little detail about some of the Pickwick employees. Last time we talked about Stackhouse to some degree, and in talking about Hecate County we mentioned Herman Mann. Maybe you'd like to talk about him in more detail, describe

his affiliation.

EPSTEIN: Well, I think I mentioned Herman Mann before. Herman was probably the nicest person whom we ever met, in the sense that he was very cooperative, very conscientious, very honest, very mild-mannered--almost saintly, in a sense--and extremely loyal. Now, he worked, as I mentioned, with Abraham and Straus in Brooklyn. And he became a very good friend of the family, in every sense. We included him in almost every family affair that we've had.

But he would not take responsibilities. He would not assume responsibilities. He was unable to tell anyone else to do something. Whether it was fear--I suppose it's a type of fear--of antagonizing anyone, but he would rather do some things himself. And for that reason he never was pushed up into higher ranks of the business. And he was satisfied. He knew it. He was satisfied to be in the position he was. He was one of our senior clerks. We gave him as much responsibility as we thought he could stand, or that he wanted. And he had the respect of everyone he ever came in contact with. He would go to great lengths to seek out a book for a customer. On his days off he would go around looking for books that his customers asked him for. And very often he'd run across some very hard-to-find things. The poor man developed a bad heart. Ann thinks that he must have had rheumatic

fever when he was a youngster because he never was a person of great energy. And he died--about five years ago now.

We had a number of other employees who were interesting in the sense that they were good book people or had other characteristics. Ben Latting, who has been with the company for a great many years, is an excellent bookman. He, too, for years fought off responsibility because of his temperament. It was a different type of temperament from Herman Mann, much more forceful and much stronger. But because of his belief that no man should govern another, for that reason he wouldn't take responsibilities to tell people what to do and see that they do it--and suffer the consequence if they didn't do it. Of course, responsibility gives you a certain authority to use it. But lately he has turned around a little bit. He's still with the company. He's a very fine person but hard to warm up to. He doesn't warm up to people. People think that he's aloof, and in some ways he is. But a very good bookman--he knows his books thoroughly. He's been a good employee to the Pickwick.

GARDNER: How long has he been there?

EPSTEIN: Oh, he worked downtown for the Argonaut with Ben for a great many years. Altogether, he's been with the Pickwick at least twenty-five years.

Guy Thompson has been with Pickwick a good many years

and is now one of the managers of the store. Reliable and resourceful. He is of Greek origin. Good bookman, but has to work under a very restrictive system for a good bookman.

Lloyd Harkema has just retired. We went to a dinner with him. All the group around the Pickwick wanted to give him quite a nice dinner or luncheon or whatever, but he wouldn't go for it. He insisted, no, he'd rather go individually to lunch with others from time to time. He was a very good employee in many ways. Lloyd is the kind of a guy who wants to be too good to too many people--or good to everybody, I should say, which is difficult to do, [and] which got him into a good many difficulties, not great difficulties but sometimes embarrassing situations because so many people whom you meet are out to take advantage of you. And a great many people did take advantage of Lloyd. He was almost naive about certain things. But he meant very well, and he was very loyal to the shop. He always tried hard to make as many good sales as he could, and he did. And he was able to handle situations sometimes, assuage a customer's anger or take over a situation that was turning bad with some clerk who was being obstinate or whatever. (The customer becomes angry, you know. It's a two-way deal. Sometimes the customer becomes obstinate, and if the clerk becomes obstinate at the same time, you're in trouble. The theory

I used to try to propound to my people: "When this guy's hot, you stay cool"--which is a good theory, if you can control it to some extent.) But Lloyd on the whole was an excellent employee, and Pickwick, I think, is going to miss him, miss him in the sense that he lent a certain amount of personality to the store. He knew so many people individually. Now the only person left who's been there any length of time, who works on the floor, is Ben Latting. And Ben is not the outgoing type that Lloyd was. However, I'm sure Pickwick will survive.

GARDNER: What was Lloyd Harkema's background?

EPSTEIN: He came from New England. He came to us after army service. He had attained the rank of a captain. He tried selling insurance, and he tried working as a detail man for some large grocery company, I think, or Standard Brands or something like that. But he didn't like it, or for whatever reason he left them and came to Hollywood, I think, with the idea of becoming an actor. Especially people just out of the army, they build up these things. But he always was a visionary of one kind or another. He came in and asked for a job, which we gave him. He liked the job. But then later on he studied acting, and later on he studied other things. But apparently he found out that he wasn't suited for it, and he was smart enough to maintain his job with us while he was trying other things. He tried being an agent for a while. But those things

just weren't for him; he just didn't have the total background, the total personality for it. So he always came back to the book business. Then he decided, well, he'd better stay with it now. He got those other things out of his system. He became a good bookman. He had an excellent memory for people and faces and their backgrounds; and very often, with my horrible memory for names and faces, I would use him as my tool. We developed a code that if I'd give him a certain kind of a nudge, he knew to look up and tell me who was coming. [laughter] I would know the person, I would converse with him, but I would be darned if I could remember the name. I would remember what they bought, the kind of books they collected, but I couldn't remember the name. And I will think of it now.

Oh, I could describe many other people who worked for us, but I don't know if they'd be of any special interest to anyone. There's a certain attraction about a bookstore that brings a type of person--sometimes the rebellious type who can get lost in books, who can't maintain a job anywhere else, in the sense that the discipline of a bookstore is different from the discipline of an office or the discipline of a factory. They can forget about discipline when they're thinking of the books they're selling, the ideas. We had people who were so in love with books that they couldn't do their work.

There's a chap who now works for another bookstore [Tony Russo]--whom I happened to bump into, as a matter of fact; I went into the store he works at just purposely to see him. He's an excellent bookman. I'm speaking of the days when we had problems with him. He would never be available to do the work of a bookstore. He would always have his nose in a book or a periodical or a piece of paper. He could not resist the reading of type. He told me the other day--there was a third person there, and I mentioned to that third person that my biggest problem with so-and-so is that I couldn't get him to get his eyes off type, that it was an attraction he couldn't resist. It could be anything. This little piece of paper here, or any other. He told me, "You know, Mr. E, my wife complains about this very same thing. I'll be sitting at the breakfast table, and I'll read all the things around the boxes of the breakfast food if there was nothing else to read." But he's an extremely intelligent guy, and I think he's overcoming that to quite a degree. I think he's disciplined himself. But can you imagine that that was the only thing I could find wrong with the man? But it was a terrible thing that he became, in a sense, almost useless to us because of that. And we tried to break him of that habit. He knew that he was wasting half his days. But we would give him a box of books to open, and he would have to find out exactly what each one

was about--which was great if there wasn't other work to do. But he would never have an opportunity to use that knowledge in the store because he would never find time to wait on the customer.

Then we had the usual number of failures and people who were this, that, or the other. We had some people whom we had trouble with because they were on drugs, which we didn't know for some time, [and] a number of Hollywood people who wanted to make Hollywood and couldn't, which is inherent to the community.

GARDNER: Well, when you had the secondhand shop, people like Bennett and Marshall and so on passed through. Were there any later during your new-book period who moved on to their own shops?

EPSTEIN: No, Bennett and Marshall, I think, were the last of those who came and later opened their own shops. Marshall worked for me when I was still on Eighth Street. We hired Bob Bennett when we first opened Pickwick on Hollywood Boulevard. They were much too high caliber for the jobs that we had to offer at that time. Had they come at their age after we'd established the Pickwick, where we could have used the qualities they had to a greater degree, I doubt whether we could have retained them, because I think their ambition was quite high and their capabilities were quite high. But this was during the Depression years, and they were capable people holding

down very minor jobs. Of course, they were both much younger. They were both very young, as we all were at that time. When Dick Marshall worked for me, I think, well, I might have been a year or two older than he, because he was not. . . . I don't recollect how old Dick was when he died. At any rate, Dick worked for us for a while, then left and went into buying and selling of books. Then he went to work for Dawson. And later on Bob Bennett worked for Dawson.

They came up at a very fast pace. They were very fortunate. They found one or two customers who were very wealthy, who took a great interest in their becoming a success. They backed them with either buying a lot of things from them from time to time, loaning them money to buy larger libraries than they could afford, and introduced them to other wealthy people. One of the women in particular, so the story was told to me, would hold a salon and have them bring their books, or other things, and have these wealthy women come in on that particular day. And they would do their selling act. They were good salesmen. They were nice personalities, in the sense they could explain to people how these things could be handled.

Bob was a very fine person. Dick was a harder person and more aggressive in the sense that he wanted to make money much faster than he did, although they did extremely

well towards their later years. But they had a struggle. My brother tells me--he was right across the street from them, and he knew them at a certain time much better than I did during that period--that they were having a hard time until this certain woman became very much interested in them and really gave them a terrific push up, which helped them a great deal. I suppose they were deserving of it, because Bob probably provided this woman with a lot of things she wanted and needed. To her, it was a thing. She was a maiden lady who had to have some kind of an interest, and books were her interest. She wanted to spread it. It's a give and take. She got something and they got something.

GARDNER: There was one name that I found when I was going through this list of the antiquarians who was affiliated with Pickwick, Robert Wettereau.

EPSTEIN: Oh, Bob Wettereau, oh, yes. Bob Wettereau--the poor man has since died. It's just horrible for me to have to tell you of all the people who died, and they died before their time. Bob was certainly not old enough to have died. He died while on a trip to Europe. Bob was a very fine young man. He came to work for us. His background I don't think too much about, except that he married this girl from Texas, a very fine girl, and they had their first child while he was working for us. He came to me as a clerk. He was far above average in intelligence--

far above what the average clerk's intelligence was--and his interests were much higher and more literary. He was greatly interested in art, and he had a good knowledge of art. As a matter of fact, he later went to work for Flax in Westwood and built up a very fine business in art books for them simply because of his own knowledge. Now, what's happened, that department I hear has gone almost to pot. The last I heard, they hired a buyer who at one time had worked for us to do the buying; when I heard that she was going to be the buyer, I knew that she could not do the job, didn't have the background involved for it. At any rate, Bob stayed with us for quite a while. We tried to develop an art department which he could run, but we just didn't have the resources for it at the time. And he tried very hard, and he developed a lot. Then we gave that idea up and put him in charge of paperbacks; and he did very well with that--as far as he could at that time. Whatever he did, he did well. He was a good talker. The only complaint we might have had is that there were too many discussions going on when there might have been other work to do. But that's to be expected of that type of a person. However, our type of business didn't allow for a great deal of expenditures of time on individual customers. And he is the person whom Anais Nin became very close with. I think she took advantage of him in many instances by inducing him to

give her much more space than she was entitled to at the time and getting him to do things which were more to her interest than to the shop's interest. In spite of the fact that she looks like an ethereal person, almost to be blown away, goodness, she was a hard person. At least, she proved herself in dealing with us. Very pushy. But that is her nature.

GARDNER: We went through that last time, right.

EPSTEIN: You have my account of what happened, her going out and taking the responsibility of buying books for us. That really tripped me up. But Bob left us and went to work for Flax. He did an excellent job there, and I was sorry to hear that he died at such an early age.

GARDNER: Any other Pickwick employees you'd like to run through?

ESPTEIN: There are a few I'd like to mention--for other reasons than their qualities. [laughter] For the most part, I've mentioned those that have done well for us now. Of course, Elliot Leonard, I gave you his background, and I've told you a good deal about Stackhouse and his service with the Pickwick. During the formative days of the Pickwick, Stackhouse was the keystone of the business. He carried on for a good many years, for which we're very thankful. Although he was rather proud of the Pickwick's progress later, I don't think he completely liked the expansion and the way it affected him, in the sense that

his end of the business, the remainder business, was circumscribed somewhat. We got so large, we had to carry such a large inventory, that the company complained about it--rightfully. That was his style of doing business; it was the antithesis of the way a large company operates. Whereas we didn't pay strict attention to inventory figures and were still quite profitable--and I think the fact that we didn't pay strict attention to inventory figures in the sense that we would want to control our inventory and make it as small as possible. We worked almost the other way. We carried a tremendous inventory of books that no one else would carry. And we could rightly be accused of not being overbusinesslike because of that. It probably would have been more profitable if we had carried fewer copies of the books we did carry, and maybe fewer titles. But as long as the business was showing a good profit, why, I felt--and he felt--that maybe that's the secret of our success, by not being too businesslike. And there is something to that--at least for a business of our type. If we were selling shirts and so forth, we would have accurate figures of exactly how many we sell of a certain size; we'd have to choose at the end. In my buying, I had to choose for almost 40,000 titles a year, plus all the books that had ever been published before that were still in print. I had a greed for titles, you might say. I don't

know what other expression to use. I wanted to have as many titles as possible--if I thought they were good books, very often, if I knew there was a demand for them, even if I knew that they were not good books. They were not books that went out to make people bad, but they might have been badly written or maybe too amateurish. But if there were enough amateurs who wanted them and didn't want the better books, then we gave them the book that they wanted. It was not our province to tell them. We tried to tell them, "Put the two, one next to the other and show them. This is the better one." Like in the instance of selling dictionaries: People ask me, "Which is the best dictionary?" Well, you really can't give them an answer. You can, perhaps, in telling them, "Well, the best one, of course, is the unabridged." But when they get into the collegiate size and the smaller ones, it's hard to tell a person which is the best. Each has some points about it that make it superior in that particular category to the other. Some people will buy a dictionary simply because the type is better; they can read it. Other people will want to know how many different kinds of entries, and what type of spelling or orthographies they have, or what hints they have on how to use words. How can one tell really which is the best book for the person? Very often we could, and we did, tell them. That is the reason we always carry such a variety of things. If I made up my

mind that the World Publishing Company was the best dictionary, and my customer says no, he wants a Merriam, I'm not about to stop and argue with him and say, "Look, you're wrong."

I walked out of a store the other day because I went in to buy something, went in to buy a filler for a fountain pen. Now, how can you think that two people can become involved in an argument about a filler for a fountain pen? Well, I have a Cross pen, and I want a certain color. And this girl showed me a color which was a blue-black instead of a black. And I wanted a black. I wouldn't mind if she had tried to explain to me that these are practically similar. She thought they were similar. But she used the term, "Are you trying to tell me that I don't know?" Which of course antagonized me. I said, "Look, lady, I'm not trying to tell you anything here. Goodbye." And I walked right out.

But this is the kind of a thing: we try never to have a person argue with a customer. We tried to have a variety to show them. But if they chose the lesser one, well, maybe that's why the lesser one was published. We always tried to tell them, "Look, never argue with a customer, even if you know that the customer is wrong. Just say, 'Well, maybe. Maybe you're right,' if the person particular is adamant, because number one, you're not going to change his mind if they're that adamant, and number two, why argue

with them? You have nothing to gain, absolutely nothing to gain, and you'll lose a customer. Don't make it a personal matter unless he insults you or something like that." We did tell our people that they should not argue, but by the same token, that they did not have to take insults from anyone; and if necessary, call me, and if I can't make peace and they're insulting to you, I will ask them to leave. And I have done that. I feel that is the least that I could do to maintain the morale of my people. They're entitled to that backing. But I said, "By the same token, I want you to be extremely honest with the customer and tell them only things that you know. Don't tell them things that you don't know."

GARDNER: One thing that I don't think we've covered adequately is the expansion of Pickwick--not the later one, but just taking over the saloon.

EPSTEIN: Well, taking over the saloon is--the way we say that, "taking over the saloon," sounds very funny. I think the only reason it's ever mentioned is that some people have written that it's the only time in history where books have done better business than liquor. It's the same location. We were very proud that we could accomplish that trick. The original shop, as you know, was only twenty-six feet wide, and as we grew and started developing our stock of new books, we had to force our old books upstairs and our remainders upstairs. And the new-book business was

was growing. We were just totally running out of room. Well, next door, the forty-foot building to the west of us, the corner, was being operated as a saloon, as a bar, and a portion of it was a little tiny restaurant. And the landlord was having a hard time with the tenants, and the tenants were having a hard time because the bar was being constantly raided and had a very bad reputation for the type of clientele it handled. So the bar finally moved out. The landlord came to us and told us that we should buy it. Well, we would have loved to have had it, but there was a matter of money. Finally we worked out a deal where we could give him enough money to satisfy the down payment, and we broke through the thing and created the larger store. It was a two-story building, and above that were apartments. Later, we took over the apartments for offices.

That allowed us to almost double our merchandise inventory and create a better mix. We then went into the paperback business in a real way. We built what was then the largest paperback department in the city. And we had to learn how to sell paperbacks. But the involvement was--it was a real estate transaction which turned out very fortuitously for us.

It caused a great deal of trouble during the remodeling period. The city gave us a lot of trouble. It was an old building and, of course, not up to modern

building standards. And if you recollect, several earthquakes have happened since that building was built. And after each earthquake the building standards become more strict in certain areas of construction. Well, we had to have an entry between the two buildings. And we had a heck of a time trying to get the approval of the building department because the building was not concrete and steel. The foundation was concrete, but then it was brick up above that. Well, we finally worked out a deal with the city where [within] that opening between the two stores, which was much smaller than we wanted, we had to practically build a separate little construction piece, a separate little building, you might call it, in that shape. All around that is concrete and steel. [tape stopped] That is an archway built of concrete and steel which will support the building. It's much stronger than the original building. We tore out a cement foundation for that building which was about four feet deep, solid cement. We had to tear out two foundations of two buildings. And one of them, the older building--we had a devil of a time getting it out. Anyway, we had to tear out in some areas four feet deep of concrete, heavy concrete. The corner building wasn't as well constructed--about three feet. And put in a four-foot deep concrete and steel foundation. And I'll tell you, concrete and lots and lots of steel to help support the upper floor of

the building. They explained to us the steel prevents lateral stress. Concrete does not resist lateral stress. Now, in case you ever build a building, you'll remember that. [laughter]

It was an eventful occasion in the sense that it was something that had never been done--a bookstore pushing out a bar. And on the boulevard, of course, it meant that we would have a great big sign. And it was greeted with a great deal of delight by our customers when they found that they could have more room to look at books and more books to look at. You know, book people--if you had a building three times that big, they would still look at most of the books in that store. Some people will go from one section to the other, and you'll be amazed what they'll come up with, and they sometimes are amazed.

TAPE NUMBER: IX, SIDE ONE

JULY 2, 1974

GARDNER: Now, you have in front of you once again the list of the bookstores that you compiled from the telephone directory. If you'd like to run through a few and comment on them. . . .

EPSTEIN: As I told you, I made a rather sketchy rundown of the phone books at the phone company for that period in order to refresh my memory about some of the people whom I knew throughout the years. Now, we covered up through about 1940, and I see here in my notes for 1941 the Beverly Hills Book and Record Shop at 350 North Beverly Drive. I remember that shop very well because I used to drop in there, and I still know the people who used to run it. Bill Smith, who later on went into the book business in Carmel Valley up in California, had a nice store there--which was a curious store in that they sold books and cakes. His wife was an excellent baker; so she would bake special cakes for people, and he would sell the books. And his brother-in-law, Joe Mittenthal--Joe Mittenthal still sells books, but he's now a publisher's representative. He represents Crown and Scribner's and several other publishers in the areas outside of Los Angeles, practically in the six, seven, or eight western states. They were good book people, and they were very nice people.

Curiously enough, Bill Smith's father was a very good customer of mine; he used to collect a lot of books. And I think the father made some money in the lumber business, as I recollect him telling me. He probably put up the money for the first venture, because it was immediately following the Depression, and they were both of them young, and I'm positive they never had any money.

At any rate, they lasted there, oh, about two, three years, and they just didn't quite make it. And I believe that it was [Walter] Martindale who bought their store because he didn't want any competition too close to him. And then he gave up the store. And I believe it's the same store that later was taken over for a bookstore by Brentano's when they entered the territory. They had a store on Seventh Street and then one in Beverly Hills. They eventually gave it up because they couldn't transfer the image of Brentano's to the Los Angeles area. By that time, the image of Brentano's had been greatly tarnished, because during the Depression they lost a lot of their stores and it was not the store that people had been accustomed to seeing, a Brentano's store as of before the Depression, "all the world's books" and so forth. That's the history of that store.

And I notice in my notes that I have Fredrick Dahlstrom on 710 West Sixth Street. Fredrick Dahlstrom later combined with someone else and became the Bookman's Shop. But

I can't recollect the name of the man he combined with. At any rate, it was a store that didn't last very long. [bell rings; tape stopped] Then there was Everybody's Bookshop. It started about a block and a half from my West Eighth Street store. The chap's name was [Saul] Elstein--I'm trying to think of what his first name was--a very nice old man. The name of Everybody's Bookshop is still going on, and the grandson [Steve] is now running it on West Sixth Street in downtown Los Angeles. A great deal of the business is secondhand magazines. I don't think the original Mr. Elstein's son [Herbert] developed it in the right direction. The young man who's running it now, I don't know how well he's doing, but from my point of view I don't think he's doing that well. And Martindale was already in business, of course, on Santa Monica Boulevard.

GARDNER: Which Martindale is that?

EPSTEIN: Walter. Of course, he was in business for many years before 1941. But he got into the book business in a curious way. I may have told you earlier that I had met the whole Martindale family, the three sons and the father. They were originally in the cigar and magazine business. They had cigar stands and magazines. They had a store on West Sixth Street when I opened my first shop in Los Angeles on West Sixth Street. I was two or three doors away from their cigar stand and magazine shop, and at that time I

met them all.

Walter broke away from his father's business, one of the first of the three. They eventually all broke away. Walter broke away and he started a place on Santa Monica Boulevard in Beverly Hills. But it was also cigars and magazines. Next door to him was an older woman who was running a circulating library. It was a tiny place, and she was getting tired of it and, I don't imagine, made very much money at it. She tried to sell it and couldn't find any buyers for it. So she told Walter to take it and pay her off whatever little he could afford out of the circulating library business as he made it. That's how he got it. And then he developed it from that. He gave up the circulating library and went into the regular book business. And gradually, along with his magazines, he established quite a big business. You're aware that Walter has already sold his business, his four stores now, to Doubleday.

GARDNER: Yes.

EPSTEIN: That just recently happened; it's been verified. I understand they're already beginning to tear out and replace.

GARDNER: I've heard that. I don't know. Before you go on to the next one, maybe you can give a little bit of the Martindale family history as it developed, because I understand it's a curious one--a Gothic one; put it that way.

EPSTEIN: I can't speak for it as really family history, only as they relate to the book business. I can't comment on their character. They were much rougher people than most booksellers were at the time. Bill Martindale, in Santa Monica, runs a store. He runs a pretty fair store. It's not a literary store in a sense. He himself never professed to be a bookman, but he has people whom he has confidence in and [who] run a pretty fair sort of business. There was another brother--let's see, was it Dick?--I think Dick. There was Bill, Dick, Walter. At any rate, there was another brother who later went into the book business. He had a bookstore on Wilshire Boulevard, not too far from La Brea, on the south side of the street. It was also magazines and books and circulating library. He tried to follow the pattern he knew. He knew magazines best because he was born and raised in it. Then they added books. But he sold out and moved up to a place called Paradise, California. He moved up to Paradise, California, and I understand he's still running a small bookstore there. This one that moved up north had an alcoholic problem. In that way he was an unfortunate person. The father was a rough sort of a person. The mother is still living [since dead], is very old, and I understand she just moved into a rest home or something such as that.

But the family never got along well together. The brothers had quarrels with each other, and the wives of

the brothers, for one reason or another, never got along. But Walter and his wife were the most successful ones. I think Virginia had an awful lot to do with it. I think she's a very level-headed woman, very practical, and has a good business head on her. Somewhere along the line Walter and Virginia made a lot of money. It could not have been in books. It may have to do with some fortunate investments, because Walter flies his own plane still. At one time he had two planes. He had a home in Malibu plus his home in Beverly Hills at a time when most booksellers were barely making a decent living--including myself, who was supposed to be one of the kingpins; we were living very modestly. We had no money for airplanes--that's for sure. And that's about the size of it.

People working for Walter were always unhappy. And I'm not saying this in any derogatory sense to Walter. He always believed that if you came to work for him, you should work just as hard as he does. And of course some people just don't work as hard as others. Otherwise they might not be clerks in the bookstore--or a clerk anywhere else. Usually people who work very, very hard and intelligently wind up doing something different from just selling books for somebody else. Of course, I always had that tendency, too--I always had that belief, too--but perhaps I curbed my style a little more than his, although a great many of the people working for me told me that I was

a driver, and I was. But perhaps I used a little bit more velvet on my glove. [laughter]

But on the whole Walter's a very decent person. He has certain ideals, and he lives up to them 100 percent. If he thinks a thing is wrong, he just won't do it. If a thing is right, he insists on it being done. Maybe there's not enough leeway between white and black in his character. But Virginia's a much more practical person--she, too, very hardheaded. There were other family problems in the family--and most families have problems of which I'm aware--but I don't think it should appear in anything like this.

GARDNER: Okay. Then you can continue down the list.

EPSTEIN: There's a chap, just for the record, by the name of O.C. Nielsen, who had a magazine service at 7064 Hollywood Boulevard. He had mostly magazines and did some research work for libraries. He also had books. He and I, although we're theoretically competitors, got along beautifully. He sold out his business and retired to some part-time business and was very happy with it. He never had any great ambition to make a lot of money.

Then of course we spoke about Bennett and Marshall. They appeared on the scene as proprietors in 1942, as a definite address. They had been working out of their home, I think, for a little while before that. They built a nice store--had a rough time, as most beginners did in that period.

They gradually built up a very decent business.

Then there was quite a famous shop in Pasadena, the Brown shop. It was being run by Lloyd Severe. Of course, Pasadena's book business, you know, was dominated by Vroman's. Lloyd Severe at one time, I think, worked for Vroman's. Oh, no, Brown, Mr. [Herbert F.] Brown, at one time worked for Vroman's. And Mr. Vroman frankly told him that he ought to open a shop of his own. If he was going to have a competitor, he'd rather have a fellow like Brown than maybe some other upstart coming in who didn't know anything about the book business. So Brown opened a shop at 190 East Colorado Street. That's where I first knew them. They may have had another location of which I'm not aware. And Lloyd Severe--in 1942, Lloyd Severe was already running the book department of Brown's. Brown's went into the stationery business also and developed a pretty fair business in commercial stationery. But they never had the success that Vroman's did. Vroman's cover the area like a blanket. And, of course, Pasadena was a very social, "in" city. And if you were in, you were in; if you were out, you weren't quite in. And that's the position Brown's occupied to Vroman's. It wasn't till later years that the scene started changing, and the mixture of people in Pasadena changed so radically that I think if it was any other store besides Vroman's, they might not have been doing so well. But I think Vroman's still carries

a great deal of weight, and they run an excellent shop. They're doing quite well. Now, Lloyd Severe, who was in the book business about fifty years, was recently honored by the Masquers. Unfortunately, we had another family affair that we just couldn't possibly skip on the same evening. I would have loved to have been there. We sent him a letter about it telling him. Later, we were in touch with him, and they said they appreciate the fact that we did send the letter and contributed something for him. He did a great deal of work for the Southern California Booksellers Association over the years. He was the kind of a guy that could tie a lot of ends together. And he also worked on the "Cavalcade of Books" TV program. He was an assistant to Jack Case. After he left the book business, he worked with Jack Case for a number of years, helping him to run that program, the "Cavalcade of Books." Thoroughly dedicated to books, and a very fine character. His wife, Gladys, too, was right there with him all the time. But he never owned any portion of the business, unfortunately, and I don't know that Mr. Brown ever gave him too much salary. He's far from destitute. He's living happily; there's no lack of a livelihood. But for all the years he spent in the business, he came out of it with not too much.

GARDNER: What was his background? Where was he before Brown's?

EPSTEIN: Well, he came out of Iowa. He boasted about the fact. And I think Brown came out of Iowa. You know, Iowa provided a great deal of the immigrants in the early days for all of Southern California, especially Long Beach and that area there.

There is one kind of a bookstore that I would like to mention as a kind of a thing a person with a will can do if they dedicate themselves to it, and that was the Jewish-American Bookshop. That appeared on the scene on South Fairfax in 1942. But the story of that bookshop goes back much further. I don't know if I mentioned it before.

GARDNER: You mentioned it in a different context, not as called the Jewish-American bookstores.

EPSTEIN: Yes, as Mrs. Blatt's. That to me was always a very fine example of a person's dedication to an idea of trying to fill a need of something that she felt was there. And she was absolutely right. She succeeded very well for a great many years in the Jewish-American Bookshop on Fairfax, was doing rather well; but of course later the mother became sick and the daughter was running it by herself. I understand now that it's been closed, I think since we started our talks. And Miss Lucille Blatt--the daughter never married--is now working for Harelick and Roth, which is a Jewish bookstore that's a very up-and-coming operation.

GARDNER: Where is that? Also on Fairfax?

EPSTEIN: That's on La Cienega opposite Temple Beth Am, just

below Olympic. That shop is doing rather well.

In 1942 Ver Brugge Books--not Zeitlin-Ver Brugge--Ver Brugge Books is listed as having an address at 1806 West Seventh Street. Now, that was a separate business temporarily from Zeitlin-Ver Brugge. You wouldn't recollect this because you're too young: 1806 West Seventh was the site of the Otis Art Institute. In back of the Otis Art Institute was a large old-fashioned carriage house, stables or carriage house. Jake rented that and used the bottom for sales, and an upper balcony--I don't think Jake fixed up those rooms, but there were rooms. Now, whether they were originally constructed when the building was constructed or later, maybe those rooms were constructed originally for the people who worked the horses and the carriages. But at any rate, they had that place there, and they operated from there for many years. Now, I don't recollect exactly what Josephine Ver Brugge was doing which was separate from Jake. I think she was doing periodicals, maybe, because they later came into the periodicals business. But at any rate, that was that big barn back of the Otis Art Institute.

I remember one time Jake and I--he had access to some duplicates from the UC Library at Berkeley. They had a tremendous number of books stored under the stadium at Berkeley. Jake had very little money. I had a trifle more than a little, so he came to me and said, "Why don't

we go up there, buy the stuff?" He'll take the periodicals, and I'll take the books--which we did. And we got several loads, great big truckload of stuff. Then, of course, came the question of what is a periodical and what is a book. Is a book in series a periodical if it's an actual book coming out intermittently without any definite publication day? I mean, it's a serial if it comes in series. Some things are published independently--it's called a certain kind of a series, but it may be one book in five years, or there may be three books in one year. So we had to battle that out amongst ourselves. We finally came to a compromise on that. I advanced all the money, and Jake was supposed to pay me out as he sold out of the periodicals. Well, the thing dragged on for years. Finally I think I got all my money out of it. Jake thinks I got a little more than my money out of it. We still argue about it sometimes when we get together. But it was an excellent deal for both of us. There were a lot of things in there which I wish I had kept, because some of those paperbound things later became very scarce because the editions were small. But that was the way it was done in those days.

Now, coming into '43, Holmes had now become a little less active. He still had several stores around, but I think his years were beginning to get to him. And not only his years--his personality was beginning to be affected, apparently.

There was a little shop opened in the Farmer's Market at that period of time which was run by a woman by the name of Deighton, Lillian Deighton. Now, the one reason I mention her is not because she became a very successful bookwoman, although she ran a small bookshop, like all things in the Farmer's Market, on a very small scale. She sold cards and little gifts and a smallish selection of books. But the reason I mention her is she is the woman who did all of the research for Gone with the Wind. She was working for a studio--Selznick. She used to come into Eighth Street and bought a lot of books from me. I got an idea of the type of things she needed and wanted, and I made a special effort to get them for her. And it was a worthwhile thing because she had plenty of money to spend and we could get the things she needed. She bought them, and always paid a fair price, and never gave us any problems about offering us less than what we asked. And she was always very thankful that we did find things for her. Then when we moved to Hollywood, this relationship continued for many years. Finally Selznick gave up the studio, and she was out of a job. So she came and talked to me, and she said, "I'd like to open a little bookshop." So I said, "Well, you have more background and knowledge of books than most anybody in the book business at the time they started, and there's no reason, if you have a few hundred dollars, that you can't

gradually build it up." She told me about the place in the Farmer's Market, and I said, "Well, you get a lot of traffic." And so she did, and she made a living at it for quite a while. And then she got tired and gave it up. But she was the one that did all the research for the Gone with the Wind picture--apparently did an excellent job. She had a feel for what she needed. She knew what she needed and apparently found a great many of the things she needed because the success of the picture was helped by all of the various sets and art work that went into it. And she was the one that had to provide all the books and background material for it.

At that time, Moby Dick moved out of the downtown area. Strictly for the record, there was another bookstore that opened to fill a need, and that was in the Jewish section of Boyle Heights at 2212 Brooklyn Avenue--Solomon's Hebrew and English Bookstore. Now, to this day there's a Solomon's Bookstore on Fairfax. It's still in business. The old gentleman, Solomon, was a very good friend of my family when they were in business in Boyle Heights on Brooklyn Avenue. The older of the descendants still remember my parents. Once in a while when I'm around there shopping for delicatessen or need something, I'll drop in. Or around the holiday season I will need some special kind of candy or toys for the children, and I drop in and say hello. But they're still operating. They've got almost

everything now, from the tallesin, which means the prayer shawl, and the phylacteries, which you wear around your head and your arms. And they go in more for Orthodox things, that the Orthodox use. They all speak Hebrew in there. The children were all well educated. I don't know how they live on that one store--two or maybe three families. I don't know. Maybe part of them have other jobs, too. But they always seem to be around. They've been in that business for all these many, many years. You can buy Passover wine there, and artifacts from Israel, and Jewish magazines. But they're gradually shifting over to things that are non-Orthodox. They had schoolbooks for the Orthodox and for the teachers. But now I think a lot of that business is going away because the children are being given books, and I suppose the teachers are given supplies. They probably buy direct from the publishers. But they seem to be doing a thriving business with other types of things. That's an outgrowth of something from Boyle Heights. I'm always trying to sell the story of Boyle Heights. [laughter] A great many interesting, capable, and very successful people came out of Boyle Heights around that period. I think I mentioned a few of them not too far back.

Then in 1944, skipping very quickly--I have a note that Bertha G. Blatt was the name of the mother of the Jewish-American Bookstore, the mother who started it.

Lucille was the daughter's name. She gave up the shop and now works for Harelick and Roth. There was an outfit called Bookazine started up on Spring Street run by a chap by the name of Harry Dale. He was a flamboyant type of person--big talker but his checks bounced. I'll say that he meant well, and he had a lot of family problems. His father was supposed to be in the business before him, and the father developed cancer and was a source of great expense for a number of years. He just clung onto life. Hospitalization and medication. He did take care of his father in that respect. It was touch and go. But his big break came eventually--I think I told you, I mentioned earlier--when Mr. Holmes sold him the balance of his stock, for something like $8,000, after he turned down an offer from Pickwick; or rather he was asking Pickwick for something like close to $30,000 and was too prideful to sell to the Pickwick because he was the kingpin and I was the young man just starting in. And another thing, Stackhouse had worked for him, and he just couldn't stand the idea of selling out to a store where his former employee was now manager. So he took a terrific loss to satisfy his pride. But by that time his mind was almost all gone.

That made Harry Dale into a big operator. Then he started a bookstore on Hill Street. Then he went into the wholesale record business. And that was just his big thing, because he really went out and--sort of a rack jobber

operation. He could really go out in a big way. But eventually he went the way of all people who operate in that order. By the time he passed away, his wife inherited very little. There's a place called the Bookazine, and that was Harry Dale's.

There's a place called the Argosy Bookshop on 5505 Hollywood Boulevard. That, too, didn't last very long. It was run by a musician. (I'm trying to think of his name. Somewhere in the back of my head the name exists--Loos or Roos or something like that.) I believe he was a flutist with the Los Angeles Philharmonic. A very nice man. It was one of those things to run as a fun thing. He and I got along very well. We did quite a bit of business together over a period of years. He would buy from me; I'd buy from him. When I was in the old-book business, I bought a great deal from other dealers. I made it a point to visit them, because they would give me a discount. Sometimes we would trade for things they needed, for things that they had in stock, and they would come to us.

That year, also, Brentano's opened at 611 West Seventh; 611, if you know your downtown numbers, is directly opposite Robinson's. They rented a store there. Karl Placht, who had at one time run a bookstore in New York, supposed to be a very fine bookman, came out here and tried to run a Brentano-type bookstore out here, and it failed dismally. In the first place, they didn't know the approach, the

type of people they had to deal with, and they didn't know how to stock a store properly for a western market. And Brentano's had an idea--and this is no criticism of Karl, because a lot of policies he had to work under were not his. They were given to him--directives. They just couldn't figure out the type of book which Los Angeles needs. They would send him all kinds of things that he didn't need, and overloaded him with merchandise that he couldn't use. In addition to that, he had to scramble on his own for the things he was getting called for. But Karl was a good bookman, and he later became a representative for several New York publishers. He became a publisher's representative. Let's see, who did he have? I think he had Dutton at one time and several others, with whom he had done a good job. Karl Placht had been a president of the American Booksellers Association when he was in retail in New York. We became quite friendly. He's now retired and lives in some retirement village near La Jolla or in that area. I told you Brentano's also had a store in Beverly Hills.

Joe Chevalier appears on the scene with a lending library at 239 North Larchmont. Now, Joe is still operating. Of course, he no longer has a lending library. Joe's a very fine person, pleasant, not overly aggressive--probably not aggressive at all in the sense that, well, he has a small business, he's happy with it, he has no family to

raise, he has a wife and they seem to get along very nicely with what they do. He, too, at one time was a president of the Southern California Booksellers Association. Incidentally, in speaking of Lloyd Severe, I hope I mentioned that he had been a president of the Southern California Booksellers Association. As a matter of fact, I think he had several terms.

GARDNER: What was Chevalier's background?

EPSTEIN: Well, I don't know too much about his background other than he appeared and there he was. A lot of the people, I know something about their background before books, but a lot of them I just don't.

Now, I mentioned to you the Hollywood Bookstore, which was directly across the street from the Pickwick, or almost directly--slightly west. By that time it was owned by a person by the name of Allan Weatherby. Allan was a very educated guy--Harvard man, I think--and an awful businessman. And he was having a few psychological problems of one kind or another. He eventually had to sell the business or lost the business. And the name was bought out by someone else. But now the name of Hollywood Bookstore is almost meaningless, because there are about four or five stores with the first name--Hollywood Bookland and Hollywood Book Service and Hollywood this, that, and the other. But at that time there was only the one Hollywood Bookstore. In saying that the name is meaningless, I don't

mean to deprecate the stores that are using the name similar to it, but it has no relation to the type of thing that the Hollywood Bookstore was. As a matter of fact, most of them are secondhand bookstores, whereas the Hollywood Bookstore at one time was the bookstore in Hollywood.

Curiously--sometimes it surprises me no end, in looking back--with all these well-established stores, Pickwick was able to prosper, and they all went down. Some people say that my competition was too much for them. But I think in each case I can refute that by saying that almost in each case something happened to the management. They lost their will, or they lost their mind, [laughter] or they lost their incentive, or they inherited a lot of money, or they sold out to somebody who didn't know the business. And nobody's ever accused me of actually trying to put a competitor out of business. We never even had the thought. But we worked very hard. We did work very hard, and I know we worked harder than a lot of our competitors. Allan Weatherby was hardly ever at his business. The only time he showed up was when he needed some money, and then he'd go and take it out of the cash register and not even tell anybody about it. Stanley Rose--I already told you the story of poor Stanley--he did almost the same. Those were our major competitors at the time. In each case, something happened to them. I don't think it

was because we tried and forced them out of business. I don't think anybody's ever accused us of that. Our policy was strictly cooperation.

Incidentally, I mentioned Allan Weatherby was having problems. Well, I understand he's since straightened out beautifully and now teaches at some college--Amherst or somewhere like that--and is getting along very nicely. But he was having rows with his wife, and they had a child. He was going through a period, I guess.

Harry Wepplo Bookstore--I told you he was one of those who was arrested in the Hecate County case. Well, he bought out Lofland, which previously had been Lofland and Russell, a secondhand-book store at 32 West Sixth Street. He at one time worked for Miller's, across the street. And I told you the story of Mr. Miller, who had had a textbook store down near USC. Harry also worked for Pickwick at one time, which I think I mentioned. It came about in this way. He was working for Miller's, and we were just beginning to get started into new books. He was unhappy at Miller's. As I pointed out to you, I believe, he was a very odd person, and I don't think anyone would be too happy working for him for any length of time. He heard about us going into new books, and he came in and asked for the job. Stackhouse and I talked to him--of course, we knew him well because we used to exchange things--and we hired him. Well, Harry in many ways lacked stability.

He wanted to do everything for everybody, no matter what the expense to him or to his employer. His motives were good, but his executions were a total loss. He wanted to satisfy everybody and give them the best end of everything out of the goodness of his heart. He was that kind of a guy. A person would come in, and he'd say, "Well, I can't afford this." And he'd say, "Well, take it." He didn't care if it belonged to him or belonged to his boss. [laughter] Well, you can stand a little bit of that, but you can't stand too much of it. And his buying was the same way. He would buy huge quantities. He started buying for us. We didn't know any better. We thought that if he bought ten, maybe that's a good buy. But [with] some things, ten is a huge amount; and other things, a hundred is a small amount--depending on the title. At any rate, I took our whole family to Washington [D.C.] to visit Ann's people. (She's, of course, a native of Washington.) And when we got back, Stackhouse told me that Harry had bought all the remainder of the books of Houghton-Mifflin's warehouse in San Francisco. Houghton-Mifflin was giving up the San Francisco warehouse and consolidating all their things into the home place at Boston. And he told me the amount of money involved, and he showed me the list of what it was. Well, it was the worst batch of material you ever did see--broken sets, odd volumes of sets, two volumes, two and three, out of a five-volume

set, and all the things that they couldn't possibly sell which they left in their warehouse and they had to dump it somewhere. The salesman--the sheriff of Petaluma, they called him. [phone rings; tape stopped] The Houghton-Mifflin salesman was Harrison Leusler, a very fine man. At any rate, I come back to this situation. It involved a huge sum, something like $3,500. And actually, we did not have that much money. Any money coming in was immediately spent for more books. You can tie up an awful lot of money very quickly in the new-book business. And that's what we were doing, because our business was doing all right. Well, Harry had bought all these books. Knowing this, I immediately called Harrison Leusler and I said, "Look, Harrison, I can't accept those books. Don't ship them. If you ship them, I'll turn them away. I won't accept them." And then I told him, "You had no business selling those books without getting a confirmation. Harry is entitled to buy a line from you, a season's books, but he has no authority to buy a whole warehouse full of books. In the first place, that's Stackhouse's job because those are the remainders. They're not classified as new books." Well, at any rate, Harrison said, "Okay, Louis, don't. . . ." Well, Harrison's a very hard salesman. He's a nice person, but he had a hard sell. He tried to convince me that it was a good buy, but I insisted that he not ship them. We

finally compromised on a deal of about ten cents a book, and we came out all right on it. By that time we had had enough of Wepplo. How he got into the deal for Lofland's store I don't know, as Harry could never save a dime. He must have had a backer. Who it was I don't know. But that didn't last too long, and he opened the little shop in the Farmer's Market, which he ran for several years, and finally retired. I haven't seen him in years.

TAPE NUMBER: IX, SIDE TWO

JULY 15, 1974

GARDNER: We left off last time in the midst of your monumental list of the booksellers. I thought we'd try to finish that.

EPSTEIN: We were discussing some of the research I have done from memory and actually at the phone company. About the only way I could think of to run down some of the older booksellers and get some chronological order is by going through the yellow directories of the phone company, which I did on several occasions, until I got tired. At any rate, I've still got quite a number left. In 1945, Eugene Bechtold: he's still operating in the social sciences. At that time he was at 257 South Spring Street. He worked for Pickwick for a while, but he was overmeticulous. He was a wonderful person--as a person he's great--but to run a profit-making business, we just couldn't give him enough time to do the work and classification the way he liked to do it. And if he was interested in something, he had to stop and read all about it; and if he found someone with the same interest as he, why, that was the end of the day because they would spend the rest of the day talking. This is by no means a criticism of the man but a criticism of how a good person can not fit into a certain type of business. But he's very knowledgeable

and is doing a good job in the business he's in. He works for himself and devotes all the time he feels is necessary to classifying his own books of the particular product.

GARDNER: When I was looking through the notes on the antiquarians, at that point he was on his own.

EPSTEIN: Yes, 1945 he was on his own.

GARDNER: At that point he was doing mail order.

EPSTEIN: Right. He was doing a mail order business, sort of, by catalog or whatever. But he had worked for me at one time. And we're still good friends. Whenever we meet, we have great respect for each other.

There was a Lincoln Bookshop, which had several addresses. The last one they had, I think, was on Highland Avenue north of Hollywood. Now, exactly where they were in 1945 I don't remember. They may have been on Highland near Hollywood. It was a leftist bookstore, extreme left. They took, of course, a lot of punishment in those days from the rightist groups and the headhunters.

GARDNER: Who ran it? Do you recall?

EPSTEIN: I don't remember their names now, unfortunately. Mary Gordon, who at one time worked for us, worked there. She was a rabid leftist, one of the vociferous ones. But who actually ran the shop at the time, I don't know. They were not too far away from us, but we had no particular

contact except that Mary would come in, having worked for us, to visit and tell us a few things and leave us some literature. [laughter]

Harry Wepplo, I've mentioned before as being in the Hecate County case; he opened in the Farmer's Market. He had one of the small stores facing Fairfax Boulevard. He lasted until just a few years ago. I gave you a good background on him.

There was a little tiny store called the Boulevard Book and Art Shop in the same block as Pickwick was, and it was run by a chap--well, it was run by a couple; the name is [Milton and Hazel B.] Goodhand. And they had been in vaudeville and involved in the theater, that type of background. They had a little circulating library still and handled a few other odds and ends. They're very nice people. Later, Mr. Goodhand went to work for Eddie Gilbert. They're both gone now. He was with Eddie for quite some time.

The Abbey Bookshop, which I mentioned earlier, downtown on West Sixth Street, about this period of 1946 changed hands and was then owned by a chap by the name of William Weiss, who had been a musician. And he bought this store to run. He wanted to get out of the business of being a musician, but I don't think he ever quite made the change because the store never was that profitable for him to give up his musical career. He played with various studios

and other orchestras. A nice man, but he didn't last long in the trade. I think he later sold it out to Gideon Berman. Remember, I tried to think of Gideon's name when I talked about the Abbey before? It's Gideon Berman, an Israeli.

Then Larson came into the picture, [John R.] Larson's Bookshop on Hollywood Boulevard just west of Western on the south side of the street. Very peculiar man, and he had a very peculiar wife. I guess one begats the other. [laughter] He was in magazines and then went into metaphysical books quite heavily, and then in addition, as I say, research magazines of various kinds, runs of magazines. And he built up a fairly substantial business in those things that he was interested in. But I would not consider him a true bookman in the sense that he had an overall picture of the book business. That has always been the measurement amongst true bookmen. He was accused of being anti-Semitic, but I have personally never noticed it. I visited the shop and I bought things from him, and I saw no signs of it. But I was told by others that he really was. He died at rather an early age, and his wife ran the business. They were both cat connoisseurs. They had no children, so their living was the bookstore and the cats. That was the total interest of their lives. She carried on after his death for quite a few years, and it wasn't until maybe two or three years before I sold out

that she actually gave up the business. Or it may have been the year after I sold out, maybe 1967 or '68. (You see, without being in the business now, time is beginning to telescope. I never had a good memory for dates. I have an impressionistic mind, not an accurate one.) She used to visit us quite often. She paid me a great deal of respect. She always sought my advice on the things that she wanted to do. She always felt that I knew everything, which, of course, is an illusion which I try to dissuade people from. [laughter] But the fact that we were more or less successful, and having been in all the different ends of the book business, gave people the idea that we were knowledgeable of everything. I will admit, we had a lot of experiences in everything.

There was--just for the record, not really an important bookshop in the sense that they were a major kind of bookstore--a chap by the name of Rabalette, in downtown on Spring Street. He handled back numbers of magazines and some popular books in downtown Spring Street. They were in business for quite a while, but they were out of the swim of the regular book business. They dealt with an entirely different clientele from what other bookstores dealt with--the Spring Street crowd and the horse-racing crowd and the gamblers downtown, also the skid row people.

As I mentioned before, in 1946 Brentano's opened a store on Seventh Street, in the same block as Robinson's,

on the north side of the street. And they tried their darnedest to project their name into this community. But they didn't have the tools, in the sense that they never carried the kind of stock that California bookstores did. Now, we've talked about Pickwick, the tremendous stocks that we carried. But there were other stores in the city that carried major stocks of books--Martindale's and Fowler Brothers, then; in Pasadena, Vroman's. I think all of them exceeded in variety most of the main bookstores in New York. And of course, Brentano's had gone through the Depression, and they weren't the same people anymore. So they tried to chain out into California, but they were totally unsuccessful. They didn't last too long. Well, they lasted about three, four years, until they found that they just couldn't make it being managed from New York, competing with people who had managers on the spot.

GARDNER: Why is there that difference between the western and eastern stores?

EPSTEIN: In the New York area at that time, I think the prime store was Scribner's. I think Brentano's had gone down. Still, Scribner's would never carry the variety of stock that, say, Pickwick did. We carried technical books; we carried metaphysical books. Scribner's wouldn't touch either.

GARDNER: Why not?

EPSTEIN: There's no accounting for it, except that they

created an image of themselves--or over the years an image was created for them. Scribner's was a very literary store, supposedly, and catered to the very highest income group, perhaps, in New York City. They tried to establish the image. The image was created for them, and they became exclusive to certain types of books. With the population they had in New York, they could well afford to do that, whereas I think in our community, especially the Pickwick--and here I go again, speaking about the Pickwick as distinct and different from other stores--we would handle everything worthwhile (and, of course, a lot of things that weren't worthwhile). But if it was a good metaphysical book, I would want to stock a good metaphysical book. And we built up a tremendous business in metaphysical books. Then when we decided to go into technical books, we decided we'd have a good technical-book department. That, in conjunction with everything else we were handling--paperbacks and every other kind of book you could imagine, general trade books, of course. But we didn't want to become exclusive. We didn't want to become the elegant store. We definitely did not. It came up one time that the councilman of our district and a neighbor of ours--I spoke about Mr. Lamport--wanted to create the image of Hollywood, bring it back to very high class. I explained to him that you can't go home again. It's been there; you'll never bring it back. Besides, times are different. Those stores no

longer exist. Those fancy dress shops that we had on Hollywood Boulevard, which later moved--well, you couldn't possibly bring them back to Hollywood Boulevard. To try to make a Fifth Avenue out of it was just futile. I said, "I don't want to be on Fifth Avenue. I don't want a Fifth Avenue store. I didn't start out with that idea in mind, and I'm convinced that my idea's still the best. No Fifth Avenue store does as well as we do. Nor do they provide the service to the community we do."

That was the image that the New Yorkers had of themselves. They catered to certain groups. Brentano's, of course, at one time were very proud of their title, "Booksellers to the World," because they had a store in Paris. That to me was more or less ridiculous. But it made an excellent title. They didn't have the kind of competition in New York that they had here when they came out here. As I said, the store that came out here was no longer an image of the famous Brentano's store on Fifth Avenue in the twenties.

GARDNER: Could any store provide that sort of elegant atmosphere and get away with it? There's never been that kind of store here, has there?

EPSTEIN: I don't know. I honestly don't know. At these times, I don't think they could afford all that elegance, although, coming back to Brentano's on Wilshire in Beverly Hills, they are trying to do that. I have no way of knowing how successful they are. I hear one kind of a story and

then I hear another. I have no figures and I have no certain knowledge that they are succeeding, or whether they are not succeeding. The parent company is not doing too well--Macmillan Company, which owns Brentano's and which also owns Macmillan Publishing Company. The parent company's not doing too well. I have reason to believe that they're having a difficult time. It's an extremely expensive location. The stock is limited to a few good books but not a great deal of variety of a general bookstore. Now we'll have a similar type of competition. Doubleday bought out Martindale--and incidentally they've already taken the name "Martindale's" off the thing. The Martindale sign is down, off the building, and they're tearing everything apart. The whole image of Martindale's--they're getting rid of that as quickly as possible.

GARDNER: Well, we'll come back to that, too. But have you seen Walter Martindale since the transfer?

EPSTEIN: I haven't seen Walter or spoken to him. I didn't want to call him up because I didn't think it was proper for me to call him and ask him certain things. But there's a good deal of talk in the trade about how the deal was made. If the talk is relatively true, I think he made a good deal for himself. Of course, Walter is a very shrewd chap. He'll hold out until he gets what he wants.

Then several smaller book operations opened in the forties; in the middle forties there seemed to be a great

deal of activity. There was a rare-book store open in Beverly Hills on Santa Monica Boulevard called The Folio. They lasted for several years. The Paradise Book and Stationery Shop in Huntington Park is still in business, doing a fairly decent business in their own community. Spearman's on South Flower Street opened at that time. They were a Catholic-book store. They were there for several years, and then they retired. There was a chap [Diaz-Garcia], who opened the Hispano-American Bookshop, Spanish books, at 827 West Sixth. And later he moved to another location, I think on Carondelet Street, near Seventh and Carondelet, near the Otis Art Institute, in that area, near the park. The World News Company came into the picture on North Cahuenga Boulevard. They handled some books. Bill Steinberg: he handles newspapers along the walls, similar to the Universal News on Las Palmas, just south of Hollywood Boulevard, which is supposed to be the largest outdoor newsstand in the world. Harry Dale moved to West Sixth Street at that time. We spoke about Harry Dale. Two young men opened a place called Books in Review on Wilshire Boulevard. One of them has since died, but the remaining partner still operates it.* It's just as you approach Wilshire Boulevard going north from Virgil. If Virgil ran through,

* Harry Hill and Jack Brown. Hill died. The shop just changed hands (June 1975).-- [L.E.]

you could go into their shops. They do a living sort of business, in the sense that they make a decent living. Now, the survivor, I suppose, is just carrying on at about the same rate.

GARDNER: What sort of books do they handle?

EPSTEIN: A general stock of books, greeting cards, and a few other things. Coming into 1948, a chap opened up an office supplies, sports books, and magazines store on North Western Avenue. [phone rings; tape stopped] Adco--they were at 1120 North Western--1120 3/4, to be exact. They later went into the business of sporting books, books about baseball, prizefighting, and all kinds of ephemera, historical items about that; he's been at it for quite a number of years now and is doing very nicely.

GARDNER: He still does that?

EPSTEIN: He still does that. I'm trying to think of the chap's name. I did know his name but I can't remember it now. [Goodwin Goldfaden]

GARDNER: Where is he located?

EPSTEIN: He's on Santa Monica Boulevard now somewhere. I don't know the exact address. I can look it up. There again is an example of a person becoming a specialist and doing well or medium; or like Eugene Bechtold, whom we spoke about, he creates a little niche in the whole spectrum, and from that he lives. There again, to digress a little bit, people ask me, "Are there opportunities in the book

business?" Why, you can start in a hole in the wall or in a closet in the bedroom, if that's all you have, and begin to specialize and study your subject. If a person has the inquisitiveness and a little bit of gumption to make a start and starve for a few months, maybe he can gradually, over a period of time, by constant study and constant research in any field imaginable, create a book business. And Eugene Bechtold is a living example of that. I don't think Eugene's ever made much more than a living. There's one man does that, and Adco does it on sports, Burch did it on nature books. I know people who buy nothing but fiction and sell to libraries.

A chap named [Douglas] De Vorss, who had been on Grand Avenue. . . . What's the name of that hotel, and they also had an auditorium, near Grand and Ninth?

GARDNER: Embassy?

EPSTEIN: Embassy Auditorium, yeah. You've got a remarkable memory, because that was popular way before your time. He had a place of business in the back of one of the little sections of the Embassy, and then he moved to West Ninth Street. He built up a business of publishing metaphysical books. A lot of it was done for the author at the author's expense, and he would distribute them. If the author became popular, then he would become their publisher. And he built up a very good business of it. He became a widower, and he employed in his office several

women. And the husband of one of the women shot him, killed him. There might have been an affair, but it was never proven that there actually was. Of course, those things are a little difficult to prove. The business is still being run now by a nephew of his, and it's moved to Santa Monica--De Vorss and Company. And they operate a pretty fair business, I think, a very profitable business. But that was the unfortunate ending of this man.

There was another, more happy, incident that I would like to mention here about the old secondhand-book business. When he first moved to Grand Avenue, when he first started his business, he used to walk by my place. I was on Eighth Street at that time between Grand and Olive, and every time he had to go downtown, he had to pass by the store--if he was going towards the May Company or that area--to get to Broadway or Hill. One day, I went out to see some books. I wanted to buy the books, but the man insisted that I buy his bookcases also. He wouldn't sell me the books without his bookcases. And they were these Globe-Wernicke kind, which I understand now have become collectors' items--the ones that had a glass door that pulled up? The little glass door pulled up and slid to the back. Well, I was in an antique shop the other day looking for some books, and I saw those. And I made the remark that I at one time had about 200 little sections of those and I didn't know what to do with them, so I sold them for a dollar apiece. He

said, "Oh, God, we're getting. . . ." He had a rack of five of them plus the top and the bottom, and he was asking $100 for it. He explained to me that they had become very rare collectors' items. Well, to come back to Mr. De Vorss and the story about the man who insisted on me buying the bookcases, well, he had 100 or 125 sections of these bookcases. And I had no room for them. He had a very good library of books, and I just had to buy those bookcases. I think I paid him about twenty-five, fifty cents a section--which was cheap enough, I suppose, even for those days. But I had no room, and no way of getting them into the shop. Anyway, I had to buy them; I bought them; I got a truck to bring them in; and there they were on the sidewalk and me wondering how in the world I was going to get them into the store, where I was going to put them. And De Vorss walked by, and we said hello. He said, "Say, those are nice bookcases." I said, "Yes, they're very nice." He said, "How much do you want for them?" I said, "Can you use them all?" He said, "Yes, I can use them all"--because he had just started there and so forth. They looked very nice. I said, "Well, give me a dollar and a half apiece for them." He said, "Okay." So out of a disaster I made a handsome profit. One never knows. At the time I was so happy to get rid of them, if he had offered me seventy-five cents apiece, I'm sure I would have taken it. But that poor man came to an unfortunate end.

The Hollywood Bookstore at that time was sold by the creditors. They had been there, the oldest bookstore in Hollywood. They were a little bit diagonal to the west, across the street from us, about five doors from where Miller's is now. The building has since been torn down for an auto park. Allan Weatherby owned it. I may have mentioned Allan before. He was a Harvard graduate, extremely knowledgeable in literature, but totally irresponsible. He had no idea where money came from. If he needed money, he would just go to the register and take whatever was there for whatever purpose--he wanted to go out and have a fine dinner or take a number of people drinking. At that time he had psychological problems of some kind or another. His wife was a very fine woman, and she suffered along with him. But they lost their business. A number of years later, he went back East, and we heard that he straightened himself out and now is a professor at some university on the East Coast and living very happily, which I'm very happy to hear.

Sammy Reiser was listed; he opened a store at 5638 Hollywood Boulevard. That was his final store, and while he was still proprietor of that, he, as I mentioned before, committed suicide. Larry Edmunds was operating at the old Reiser store. I think he had Ida Needham and Milton Luboviski working for him at the time. They were still on Cahuenga, I think.

GARDNER: They specialized in film, didn't they?

EPSTEIN: At that time, no. At that time, they had a general used-book store. The Satyr Bookshop had moved from Vine Street to Hollywood Boulevard just east of Vine. They were on Vine Street next to the Brown Derby. But the location became too expensive for them, and the Derby wanted it back, so they had to move. At that time I think Mac Gordon, the originator, had already died.

I think I mentioned Solomon's before. The Jewish bookstore moved to Fairfax from Boyle Heights. That's an event. There was a little bookstore opened up called the Studio Bookstore at 1716 North Wilcox. They had both new and old books. We're coming now to '49.

If you recollect, I spoke of a man by the name of Dave Kohn, who ran the Curio Bookshop--and the place was just stuffed with books, and neither he nor anyone else could find anything--and who had asked me how to improve his business. And I told him if he kept one and threw out two, in the proportion, he might be able to create a bookshop again, as it was purely a storage house. Well, he finally sold out to some people who renamed it The Book Center. It was later sold out to somebody else and moved to South Broadway, and it just petered out.

There was one chap I'd like to mention. He did not have a bookstore. But he sold encyclopedias, which is a world apart from bookstores, usually a very hard sell from

door to door. The chap I want to mention, his name was C.U. Branch. (Now, what the initials stand for, I don't know. I think the first name might have been Clarence.) But anyway, he had his offices at 416 West Eighth Street. [phone rings; tape stopped] C.U. Branch was a typical example of a kind of bookselling that doesn't exist anymore, I don't think. They still have door-to-door salesmen who sell encyclopedias--not from door to door, necessarily, but to wealthy people, fine sets of books. In those days, people were proud of having a library, even those who were hardly literate. But if they had the money, they of course had to have a library full of books; and they'd buy these finely bound sets, and put them on the shelves, and enjoy them whichever way they could. Sometimes they would read one. But a finely bound book is a difficult book to read in the first place. I know people who have finely bound sets of an author, but if they want to read the author, they go out and buy a copy of that book because they're hard to handle.

GARDNER: You don't want to get them dirty.

EPSTEIN: Right, because they get soiled very easily. They're highly polished, as a rule. At any rate, he would buy books from me. If we would get fine sets, he would buy them from me.

We had an arrangement: he wouldn't buy them outright. He would take a sample of a set of books that I had, or

whatever number of sets he wanted to take out, and he would try to sell them. And if he sold them, he would buy them from me. If not, he brought me back the book--which was a nice arrangement, once you got to know that he was trustworthy. Occasionally we had to wait for our money because the person that he sold them to didn't give him a check on the spot, or whatever. But on the whole, we got along very well with a number of people who did that sort of thing. At that time, there was C.C. Leonard and Grady and one or two others who did that type of thing.

However, the Depression came along, and the market for that type of book business dropped. People weren't buying those things, sets for $4- or $5- or $600. All these chaps were having a very rough time. So they started selling to schools and libraries. Schools had a regular budget, no matter how small, and they were such tough salesmen. Then they switched to things like the World Book sets, and reference sets, encyclopedias, or sets of standard authors not in fine bindings--cloth bindings. So they went ahead and created a modest living out of that. And a modest living was what most people had in those days. Some of them didn't quite succeed, and they had to do something else.

Then Branch later became a sales manager for an encyclopedia company. Not a major encyclopedia--it was, I

think, the Collier, which was the third-rate encyclopedia. And all over the years we kept in contact. Whenever he'd find a batch of good used books somewhere, he would call me and tell me about them. We became quite close friends. But he wound up, he got into a deal of some kind operating a school for GIs. After WW II, a tremendous number of GIs were either going to college or trade schools. And quite a few trade schools sprung up to teach these boys a craft--like watchmaking or the grinding of lenses or polishing stone. Any kind of a school they could think of, they started, and these chaps would come in with their GI Bill money and spend it with them. They became very successful at it until the thing petered out. But by that time, he had it made.

He was a very shrewd guy. A nice person. Hard sell--I wouldn't want him to sell me. But with all that, that was his business; that was his way of doing business. Take that coat off, and he was a very fine person. We got along very well together for, oh, twenty-five, thirty years. But I mention that simply because the type of a business--again, a person begins to specialize in something. And you know, I don't know of any salesmen who are going around to schools and colleges the same way as they did. And I'll bet you that if a person started out today and did that same thing, he could probably do very well at it, because the libraries are more prosperous now than they were then--less prosperous

than they were five years ago, but they still have quite sizable budgets compared to the budgets of those days.

Brentano's on Seventh Street combined with Gateway of Music. You wouldn't remember that. A chap started an idea of selling records the way books are sold. And he came into the nice Brentano's store on West Seventh Street, and they started this thing. They also did that at the Beverly Hills address. But the partnership didn't last long, and Brentano's went out. Gateway stayed, but Gateway didn't last too long either. It was an idea that just didn't take hold.

There was a chap who opened the Cambridge Bookshop, at 5600 Hollywood Boulevard, which again didn't last long.

Peggy Christian opened at 1071 North Western, called Christian's Bookstore. I think she was married at the time, but she ran the store herself. I walked in there one day--I didn't know her--and I saw this young woman, very attractive, in this shop that had a lot of dark corners in it; and I said to myself, "Something might happen here." I looked around; I introduced myself. She had heard of me, but she didn't know me. We talked. And I said to her, "Aren't you afraid to stay here?" "Well," she said, "my husband comes and stays with me in the later hours." But apparently the marriage broke up. She ran it herself. Then she later moved to Santa Monica Boulevard, around the corner; and finally, as you know, she's now on

La Cienega.

M. Harelick opened a Jewish-book store at 228 West Fourth Street. But he did not go into the same kind of Jewish-book store as Solomon's. A much different plane in the sense that all his books were in English. He had a broader knowledge of Jewish books, of Jewish content, rather than strictly as Solomon's were textbooks for Jewish schools and so forth--although Harelick later carried the textbook type of thing. It was mostly for the Reform and Conservatives, which use a lot of English, more English and less Hebrew. Solomon was the expert on the Hebrew. Harelick became quite expert, and quite a fine bookman for Jewish religious books. And he was a very fine person. He later combined with a man by the name of Jack Roth, and it's called Harelick and Roth. They're on La Cienega opposite Temple Beth Am, below Olympic. Mr. Harelick has since died, and Roth is operating the business using the same name and doing an excellent job.

I think that people running specialized bookshops in some ways do a tremendous service to the community. Whereas Mr. Harelick one time called me and said that his problem was that he sold to religious groups and rabbis and teachers, and every one of them wanted a discount. And he was having a hard time making ends meet. I told him that as long as he gives a discount, he was going to starve and perhaps starve to death, in the sense that he wouldn't be able to

carry on his business; that he must be adamant and explain to them that there isn't that much Jewish-book business in the city, and he is providing them with a service, and he cannot afford to give them a discount. And stick to that policy. And by God, he did that--with rare exceptions, where they bought a great big lot of books--and his business improved in the sense that he was making a profit. And I said, "You've got to teach the people to respect you, because you are providing them a service that they can't get anywhere else in the city--or hardly anywhere in the country unless they want to deal by mail with a few stores in New York, which is very inconvenient for them and where they will get no discount. They'll have to pay postage. And you explain that to them and stick to it." And I said, "You might lost some customers, but you will gain profit on the business you do to much more than offset the losses you take. And those same customers will find they can't get the book elsewhere, and they will come to you, and they will pay your price." He remembered that, and he thanked me for the advice many times.

We had to learn the same thing when we moved into Hollywood and we started selling new books. See, during the Depression we got in the habit of giving discounts. Well, you had to. I mean, people just came in, and maybe that's all they had. If you wanted a dollar and a half, and they offered you a dollar and a quarter or a dollar,

you compromised to a dollar and a quarter. Well, he was short of money; I was short of business. We did it. But when we came into Hollywood, we decided we just couldn't do it anymore, because the more people you had working, the bigger the business got, everyone had to trade with the boss because he was the only one who could give a discount. So the first thing we knew, Stackhouse or I were doing all the selling, and we didn't have any time for anything else. So we decided we would mark up books reasonably, as reasonably as we could, give absolutely no discounts. We never gave a discount on a new book, except to other dealers and occasionally to a library when they bought new books. Well, the people who had been accustomed to getting a discount or bargaining with us, we had to teach them that this is a totally different business we're in now; we just couldn't do it, and we wouldn't do it. And I think that was one of the great reasons that Pickwick stayed on an even keel all the years. Oh, we had a time with people. "What, Louis? I don't get a discount?" You know, they had been getting a discount or bargaining. "No," I said, "we're running a different kind of a store now. I can't afford to give you a discount." Because if I gave them a 10 percent discount, that was all the profit that I would make on the transaction.

GARDNER: Let me just ask one quick question. Did Harelick handle all new books?

EPSTEIN: He had a few old books, as they showed up. No, primarily new.

TAPE NUMBER: X, SIDE ONE

JULY 15, 1974

EPSTEIN: To back up a little bit to '49, I notice that I didn't mention Cambridge Bookshop, which opened on 5600 Hollywood Boulevard. That's about a block west of Western. The chap who started that, his name was [Charles] Salzman. He's still in business. I notice the following year he moved again. In the following year he moved somewhere else. I don't have the exact address. But he's still in business, and he's on Melrose Avenue, not far from La Cienega [Canterbury Book Shop, 8344 Melrose]. He runs a small shop, mostly library business, specializing in English literature.

The name of M.J. Royer comes up. In 1949 he opened a bookshop at 465 North Robertson. Later he went into art books in a big way, selling to libraries almost exclusively, and built up a very handsome business. The interesting thing about Mel Royer--to me, that is--is that he was one of my very earliest customers when I opened on Sixth Street. At that time he was an accountant. I forget the name of the firm. They used to get all the cans and metals from the city garbage collection department. In those days, you had to separate the metals from all the other waste. It was a very lucrative business for the company, and they fought the combination of

metals and all other waste products that they collected from the residences. They fought the idea for a good many years, but they finally lost. Now, of course, everything is collected together. Curiously, now there's an agitation, because metals are becoming scarce and whatnot, to recycle all these things, go back to the old system of having two containers, one for paper waste and other garbage and whatnot, and another one for metals--which I think makes sense, except that, of course, it would cost the city so much money to do that. They'd probably have to have two separate pickups. How they'll work it out, I don't know.

Mel was considered a pretty good collector at the time that I started. It was curious to find him going into the business many years later, almost twenty years later from the time I started till the time he went into business. He is a very nice person, and he made quite a nice success of it. But he recently sold out his entire stock, which was expensive and valuable stock, to a group of Japanese who packed it all up and shipped it to Japan. And what they'll do with it, I wouldn't know--it'll probably go into some libraries there. But the Japanese are beginning to buy, as you know, all art forms of any kind. I guess they needed some art books.

GARDNER: What kind of a guy was Mel Royer?

EPSTEIN: In what sense do you mean?

GARDNER: Oh, just generally.

EPSTEIN: Oh, a very nice person, very soft-spoken, a straight thinker, a square businessman. When you dealt with Mel, you were on solid ground. What he said, well, you could take as gospel. You didn't have to have signed contracts with him. He established a nice reputation amongst the libraries. I'm seventy-two, you know, and I always considered him a good bit older than I. I imagine he must have been all of five or six or seven years older than I, so he's probably either approaching eighty or in his eighties. But he became a little bit ill, and then he had a fall which laid him up for a number of months, and since that he's been doing very little. Finally, when an opportunity came, he sold his business. He'd been trying to sell his business; and he almost succeeded at another time, but the deal didn't go through. The people couldn't raise the money. But the Japanese came along with whatever he wanted, and they got the whole works. Cleaned the whole thing up; didn't bother sorting, just packed it. Another curious thing about it is that his principal assistant for so many years was a Japanese girl, [Nakuno Serisawa]. I don't know if that contributed to the sale or not.

The Spanish Bookstore moved to 629--oh, no, they were at 629 West Sixth. They later moved. The Technical Bookshop opened at 726 South Spring Street. I think they'd been open before that, but they moved to 726 South Spring.

They were there for a number of years, then they moved down to Third and Spring. Now they've closed that recently, and they're somewhere on Westwood Boulevard, I believe. They now sell, I think, medical books, too. There was a bookstore that opened at 628 West Sixth, which was across the street from my old location, 625, called the AAA Bookstore--whatever that meant.

GARDNER: That meant they wanted the first listing in the phone book.

EPSTEIN: That's exactly it. But apparently that didn't help them too much, because they didn't stay in business too long. In 1949, I noticed a new name in the phone book, John Q. Burch. Well, it wasn't new, but he'd moved to 1584 West Vernon. And I think I spoke to you about John Burch before as having become a specialist in books on conchology. He developed a worldwide business and did extremely well with it. He's a retired railroad man who went into the book business. There, again, to prove a principle, if you have an interest, you can usually build a business around it.

GARDNER: That sounds like a funny address for a bookshop.

EPSTEIN: Well, at the time it was a much better neighborhood than it is now. I'm talking about 1949.

GARDNER: I see. Did he remain there? Did he move?

EPSTEIN: He remained there for quite a few years and then moved his business to his home, which was in the area to

the west of that, the Leimert Park area.

There's a peculiar lady, Miss F. Gertzweig, who had a shop at 6093 Sunset Boulevard. She sold cards and occasionally even dresses and one thing or another. But she had a circulating library and took orders for books for people. At the time of '49, she was located not too far from--that studio on Gower--Columbia. She got a little bit of overflow of business. She was a very loud, demanding person, but she was a character. She was an old maiden lady who made her living in her own way. But she used to torment us no end. She would expect us to mail books to her, mail them to her customers and all that, demanding discounts larger than she was entitled to. We used to give dealers 10 percent discount and she always complained, "Well, how can I make a living on 10 percent?" [laughter] "Well, it's either you making a living or me making a living." "Well, you're rich, you've got this great big store." [laughter] But she was a harmless person.

Coming into 1950, Acres of Books--I think they moved at that time, sometime in 1950, from 140 Pacific Avenue, Long Beach, to Atlantic Boulevard. (They started in Long Beach long before 1950.) Acres of Books is sort of a legendary place. It was opened by Bertrand Smith. Bertrand Smith had a place called Acres of Books in Cincinnati, Ohio. A more or less successful bookseller, he was British by origin. He got a tremendous amount of space, and he would

buy anything and everything and store it away on the shelves where you had to really dig out things. And they were all reasonably priced. And eventually, if you held them long enough, some of those things that were extremely common and no account became a little bit more desirable, in the sense that somebody might always be looking for something of that nature. He built a big business on that basis. He later moved to a very, very large store on Atlantic Boulevard in Long Beach. If you've never been there, it's really a sight. It's a lot of little cubbyholes. You really have to seek and find whatever you think might be necessary. I've been there a couple of times, but it just is impossible for me to look through.

Bertrand was a very nice person--very affable, nice to talk to. He really had a genuine love for books, any kind of book. It's almost like [John W.] Todd [Jr.] of Shorey's in Seattle. A book had to be preserved, no matter what, and it was a sacrilege to destroy a book, or not to treat it with great respect--which I agree with. Every book is entitled to respect. But if everybody held onto every book that was ever published, there wouldn't be enough room in the world to keep all the books. And there wouldn't be any scarce books because all the editions would be fully available and there would be no scarcity.

But he passed on, oh, about ten years ago, and his two sons are running the business along the same lines that the

father had, and they're doing quite well.

Dale's Bookazine had moved to--Harry Dale had moved to 749 South Spring. He's the chap I told you about that bought out Holmes when the old man had to close up shop.

Jack Blum opened the Cherokee Bookshop, at 1646 Cherokee. They're now on Hollywood Boulevard, a block west of Musso's. His sons [Gene and Burt] are now taking over the business. They do a fairly good business. Gene now does most of the running of the store. They specialize in film things. One of the sons [Burt] has gone into comic books. Another one has gone into fantasy books, science fiction. And each one knows his area pretty well. There is also Jack's brother, Harry, who has been there a long time. Then they have another chap who specializes in World War I and II books. He sort of parceled out specialties into his store. In addition to that, he has a very nice stock of sets, which are becoming very scarce. Of course, they're now very high priced. But it's not the kind of a store that I would appreciate myself. Nevertheless, it's a good store.

GARDNER: What do you mean by that?

EPSTEIN: Well, it's not arranged like I would arrange it. It's hard to browse in it. They have three levels. One is a half-basement, and the third level is sort of a half-mezzanine. It's a very difficult store to browse in. As a matter of fact, they don't encourage you too much to browse.

In spite of what I say--that it isn't a kind of a store I would run--nevertheless it's still a good bookstore. Jack is a very nice person. He's on the verge of retiring now. He's just hanging on until his sons get a little bit better feel of it. They're probably waiting till he retires. [laughter] That's the usual battle between the ages.

Harry Levinson appears on the scene around 1950. He has an address at 9527 Brighton Way, but I think he did business from his home for quite a while. He came in from New York, a very knowledgeable guy with an extremely fine collection of reference books pertaining to books--very scarce bibliographies. He's a very, very able bookman. I never did much business with Harry because by that time my biggest interest was in the new-book business. He used to come in and browse through our rare books and buy some things from us from time to time. He established himself as a major bookseller, a national bookseller in rare books. He used to make his regular buying trips to Europe, all over Europe, and he's considered one of the most knowledgeable booksellers--perhaps, I would say, next to Jake. But he's a different type of character from Jake--very close-mouthed. He did participate in the antiquarian bookseller's group. He just recently gave up that location on Brighton. Now he's doing business from a very big home he bought in Beverly Hills. He built a special section of his home for

the books. Unfortunately, within a year or two after they moved into this very big home, his wife was killed in an automobile accident. And they had no children. I suspect that Harry's a fairly lonely person.* He was never a person to make friends, as Jake has and some of the others. He always stayed pretty much in the background--which is no criticism of him, by any means. Nevertheless, that's the type of personality he had. But he was an extremely able bookman, and in that context he left his mark on the book business.

I find a note here on Jack E. Reynolds. At that time he was on Santa Monica Boulevard, at 4561. Jack is still in business, a specialist in Western Americana. He's somewhere, I think, in the West Valley--16031 Sherman Way, Van Nuys. I've never been to his West Valley store. He's been there for many, many years. He still follows his specialty--very knowledgeable. He participates in various historical societies. He's written little squibs about this, that, and the other. He's active in the Westerners, Los Angeles Corral.

The Westerners have branches all over the United States; and even in London and Paris, they have corrals there. They organize a group of people whose interest is Western-book collecting--books about the West, Indians, etc., etc.

---

* He has since remarried.--[L.E.]

Somebody got the idea of having these corrals, and there's been a very active one in Los Angeles for many years. The Los Angeles one publishes a yearbook, of which I have most copies; and I'm a member of it. I think eight times a year they issue a little bulletin, and with the bulletin usually comes a treatment of some special subject by somebody in the corral whose specialty it is. Some of them are very fine pieces of research.

GARDNER: It's a historical society, really.

EPSTEIN: Yes. They don't call themselves that, but in effect that's what it is--but slightly on a different plane. It's less public than, say, the Southern California Historical Society. Jack is still active in the business, and he has a good reputation.

We'll go on to 1951. I checked over a few of the memberships of the antiquarian group members, and I find the name of Ernest E. Gottlieb. Gottlieb was a specialist in music. He died rather young, unfortunately.

Max Hunley appears on Santa Monica Boulevard in Beverly Hills. He had previously been in a little arcade just south of Santa Monica Boulevard on Beverly Drive in Beverly Hills. I don't know if you're familiar with that. There's a small arcade; it's still there. He had a small store like that in these arcades, and later he moved to the location where he still is. Just the other day, cleaning out a bunch of old catalogs--I have catalogs kicking around here, some of

them dated 1928, periods of that time--I ran across about a dozen of Max's catalogs. The earliest one was dated catalog number three, around '30, '31. So for a gag I called him. I said, "Max, I want to give you an order." He said, "Louis, that's great." So I told him, "From catalog three, give me item number seven." He said, "Louis, what are you talking about? Where did you find that?" I said, "Well, Max, I found a group of your old catalogs. How would you like to have them?" "Oh," he said, "I'd love to have them." So I said, "Okay, I'll send them on to you." He got a big kick out of that.

GARDNER: What was the item?

EPSTEIN: I have no idea. I just pulled an item out of it. Things that are now selling for fifty dollars were listed at two dollars. This is way back in the middle thirties; that was the time to buy rare books. But no one had money then. It's amazing. I think I mentioned Max before. However, Max is of the same era of my career as Mel Royer. He, too, was one of my earliest customers on Sixth Street. He, at that time, was working for a stock brokerage house. And of course the stock brokerage houses were having even a rougher time than they are now, and eventually he lost his job. He worked at something else for a while, but he was always a good book collector, and finally he went into the business. And we used to buy and sell to each other. His people had the Hunley Theatre, which was

on Hollywood Boulevard not too far from Western. He was there a long, long time. Max was a very conservative person, and even in those days I think he would venture in and out of the stock market. I'm inclined to believe that Max is quite provided with the wherewithal that people call "rich." [laughter] But we always got along very nicely. The common gag was, after I opened up on Hollywood Boulevard and began to prosper a little bit, he always said, "Louis, what do you do with all your money?"--which is still a gag between us. The first one who gets a line out when we meet.

GARDNER: He's still there on Santa Monica Boulevard?

EPSTEIN: Yes, he's still there. The shop is closed half the time. He loves to go fishing. Every year he used to go to Europe. He's a great Anglophile. He used to go to Europe for about two months and go through the bookshops there, besides taking a walking tour or a bicycle tour, combining business with pleasure. He had a nice way of living, just the way he wanted, and he ran his business that way. It leads me to believe that he wasn't that hard-pressed for business, like the rest of us were at that time; that he could do the things he did at the time he did them. None of us could close up for two months and go traveling.

GARDNER: Did he have any specialization in particular?

EPSTEIN: He specialized in first editions. He went in the children's-book market, Western books. Quite general,

rare books.

GARDNER: I made a note--I think we looked through the same catalog, probably--in that first 1950 antiquarians' listing they mention that he attended Columbia and the University of Paris as well as UCLA.

EPSTEIN: That I didn't know, and I'm glad to learn that. He was a big cut above the average bookman as far as knowledge and background was concerned. That was apparent. I knew he was well educated, but I did not know that he went to those universities.

GARDNER: Well, that attests to his humility, anyway.

EPSTEIN: That verifies the fact that there must have been money in the family, because I don't know of any other bookseller who had that kind of background, who could have afforded to go to those schools. Most of us, like Jake and myself, had to dig in to scratch out a living, and the same way for our parents. Jake's parents in Texas, where he came from--from discussions with Jake--were about on a par with my parents. Our generation just didn't have the money to send their children to those kinds of schools--I mean, our parents' generation, not my generation. Sometimes I consider myself a first-generation American; and other times I'm an immigrant because I came here when I was seven, and it's hard to identify myself with my father's generation, which is the real immigrant generation. But I'm practically raised almost as an American-born. But still

I am an immigrant.

GARDNER: My notes say--while we're vaguely on the subject--Harry Levinson went to City College of New York, which would put him, I suppose, in the same category with you and Jake, since that was a public university.

EPSTEIN: Yes, probably. Well, of course, I went to a university, too, but they didn't have those multiple colleges, as you mentioned for Max. Max had real scholarship behind him. Getting a bachelor's degree was--sometimes we attained that.

I mentioned Max, and I mentioned a few of the others. There was a chap by the name of Roman Novins who was in the book business for a short time. He had a little shop at 624 North Doheny.

Then Kurt Schwarz appears on the scene at that time. Kurt Schwarz is still in business. He operates from his home now. I think Kurt always did. No, he had a shop at one time at 450 North Beverly Drive, Beverly Hills. Kurt came from Germany. He left Germany before the concentration camp era, but he had to really escape. They went east rather than coming west, so they went through China. He lived in Manchuria for a while, I believe, and they lived for quite a while in Shanghai. His parents were booksellers, and I think even their parents before them; so he had a thorough background in the rare-book business. Fortunately, once you have a rare-book background and get to a place like

Shanghai, with that background you immediately begin to search for a way of getting into the rare-book business there. They found enough books, and then from Shanghai they could correspond to England. So they carried on, more or less, and finally came to this country. But it is apparent that they did not lose all their property. So he came here with some assets, and he didn't have to start from scratch and struggle like the case might have been with a refugee. Kurt had a stroke here a number of years ago, and he still walks with a limp, and one of his arms still bothers him. Nevertheless, he's still back conducting his business. He's training his son [Thomas F.], who, instead of having a classical education for the book business, studied psychology. I don't know how far his degree took him--whether he ever took the PhD or not. But apparently his son may follow up in the trade.

GARDNER: What was his specialization?

EPSTEIN: Well, early books in all languages. A lot of the foreign rare books. His business was predominantly in very scarce books for libraries and for collectors. But he was a very fine gentleman. His wife [Martha M.] is very nice. I remember we were there one time for a meeting, and his wife baked a chocolate cake which Ann fell in love with. And Ann asked her for the recipe, and she gave her the recipe in ounces of everything, not pints. Everything was measured in ounces, including the eggs. Ann tried the

recipe, and it came out pretty good but not quite as well as Mrs. Schwarz's. She was a Viennese cook. Everything was very rich, but excellent.

Let's see. Borzon Books: it's a shop that opened at 1624 North Las Palmas. It didn't last very long. I mention it simply because it was there. Martin Bloch opened up a little bookstore at 1716 North Wilcox. He worked for years for the Hollywood Bookstore. A very good bookman, very erratic. He later was one of the publishers and the editor of a magazine called One, which was a magazine for the gay community. I doubt whether that magazine is still in existence or not. But at any rate, he's out of that. Where he is now, I have no idea. But he was a good bookman. You never knew which way he was going to jump when you met him. But he could sell books, and he knew his books. He really was much interested in that.

Brentano's closed up their downtown store that year. California Book Company, which I mentioned to you was Max Walker, closed out. Harry Dale moved his Bookazine to 649 South Main. I think Harry used to move whenever a landlord of his couldn't wait any longer for his rent.

Howard and Reese bought 719 West Sixth Street, which was, I think, the old Curio, and it became the Book Center. I think I mentioned that. It's a Miss Howard and a Mr. Reese. Miss Howard was a musician with the Los Angeles

Philharmonic, and she was a customer of ours for many, many years. She lived with a friend of hers, a lady friend, and they were both good book buyers, both of them musicians. All of a sudden she announces to us that she had bought that store. And the partner, Reese, is a chap who used to work for us in the old-book department. I didn't think much of his ability. At any rate, they bought that store. Miss Howard always wanted to own a bookstore. And she had a few thousand dollars saved up, and she put it into that bookstore--which, of course, turned out to be a disaster. After two years, I guess, Reese had it all--not because he took it from her, but because she just didn't want it anymore.

GARDNER: Why was it a disaster?

EPSTEIN: Well, they just weren't doing any business. She didn't have any time to pay attention to it. It's the kind of store that they bought. If they'd bought, perhaps, a smaller store, they could have specialized--say, she in music, or he in something else--and they'd have built up a business. It might have had an opportunity to be successful. But as I mentioned to you, that Curio Bookshop, which became later the Book Center, was a junk heap. There were so many books in there that no one could find anything. And Reese, again, was the type of person who couldn't leave a thing alone. He had no way of measuring the worth of his time, in the sense that he would spend as much time

classifying and looking up a book that was on face worthless; but no, he had to find out the exact price at which it was published and everything about it. And having been as long in the business as he had been, working for us, and seeing all the books priced, he should have been able to throw things out, worthless things, and able to price things right from his head, instead of having to catalog separately each and every book that came his way. If he tried to do that for the entire stock of Curio Bookshop, it would take him five of his lifetimes. He had the same kind of a fault as Bechtold. But Bechtold realized that, I suppose--and we explained it to him. He went into his own specialty in a small way, out of his own home, and did his thing--whereas this chap, I don't think was as smart as Bechtold.

So poor Howard lost her money, and eventually Reese had to give the thing up, too. But these curious combinations that gathered together in the book business--simply because he had worked for the Pickwick, which gave him a little bit of status. He had worked in the old-book department there, and they had met there, in the old-book department. But Howard was a very nice woman. I was really sorry when she told me that she went into that deal. I told her, "Why didn't you consult with me?" No, she wanted to keep it private. She was a private person. But later on she told me that she wishes that she had. But I don't suppose anyone could have talked her out of it. She had almost a compulsion

that she wanted to be [in business]. I haven't seen her in years. She's no longer with the Philharmonic. She may be retired and is living quietly somewhere.

There was an outfit in South Pasadena, I believe it was, called P.D. and Ione Perkins. Oriental books. And that was their specialty: books about the Orient and Japanese books, mostly Japanese books. I don't think they had any Chinese books. And P.D. Perkins had been a salesman for the Sparkletts water firm. What was the name? It had a different name. The Coca-Cola Company of Los Angeles bought them out. And he had been a sales manager for them. Very nice man. But he got this yen for Oriental books. I guess he started collecting Oriental things. He used to go back to Japan. He gave up his job with Sparkletts. They had another name. They had two kinds of water--Sparkletts and something else.

GARDNER: Arrowhead?

EPSTEIN: Arrowhead, right. Arrowhead, that's it. I don't know what happened to the name of Arrowhead.

GARDNER: They're still there. It's another company, isn't it?

EPSTEIN: Well, they bought out Sparkletts and Arrowhead combined, and then Coca-Cola of L.A. bought the combined outfit. They were both competing water companies.

GARDNER: There still are two. I wonder what the second one is?

EPSTEIN: They may use the two different trade names. I

see Sparkletts, but I never see Arrowhead. Maybe in some other communities, they might use the name Arrowhead. I don't know. But they combined, and then a local Coca-Cola Company bought them both. I happen to know that because I own some stock in the local Coca-Cola Company--which might do better than it's doing. It was very good, but it isn't now.

At any rate, he went to Japan and lived there for a while, then he came back and he adopted Japanese mannerisms. He used to bow to you three times when you met. But he was a nice person. What he did, he did well, and apparently he made out well. They sold the company to some other people, who are running it, I think, under the same name--not Perkins, but something else. But I don't hear too much about them now.

I have a note here that this period of '51, Jack Reynolds moved to 16031 Sherman Way. I told you I didn't know just where he moved to. I'm coming to 1952. The Technical Book Company moved to 353 South Spring--I mentioned to you that they later moved to Spring--and Gideon Berman became the owner of the Abbey Bookshop, which I mentioned previously in the history.

Charlie Yale opened the shop at 985 East Green Street in Pasadena. I mentioned before that Charlie Yale had worked for Dawson's for many years. He was their second-in-command, a very fine bookman and a very fine person. I remember when

I first opened on Sixth Street, he came over and introduced himself and offered his help to answer any questions I might have, which I thought was extremely nice. I think I mentioned Mr. Dawson did the same thing. The Dawson people were always very fine, very nice people, in that they were always helping the trade. To this day, I think Glen and Muir are always doing something for the booksellers' organizations. They participate in everything bookish. Glen is on the board of Los Angeles Library Association, of which I am a member at the present time. I have a meeting tomorrow. LALA.

Coming back to Charlie Yale: he left Dawson's and opened a business of his own; and later on his son, Bud Yale, came in. Charlie Yale, unfortunately, died, oh, about five, six years after he opened the shop. And his son took over and ran it for about five, six, seven years, and then he died. It was very unfortunate, especially the son was a very young man when he died. But Charlie--I guess, I considered him about ten years older than I when I first met him at Dawson's. But he was one of the good bookish bookmen, and he knew his business, knew his Western Americana thoroughly. That was his specialty.

GARDNER: Had his son kept up the business?

EPSTEIN: The son kept up the business on Green Street until he died, when they sold off the stock. As a matter of fact, the other day, looking through the old catalogs, I found the

last catalog that was put out after the son's death, to liquidate the stock. [There were] a lot of bibliographies that I would like to have now, now that I have time to read them, just for the sake of having the background knowledge.

GARDNER: An interesting point, when I was looking through the minutes of the antiquarian society. . . .

EPSTEIN: He was, I think, the first president.

GARDNER: He was the first president, and then also, I guess you succeeded him, I think.

EPSTEIN: Yes.

GARDNER: Because when he died, I think, during your term, you gave the eulogy at the funeral.

EPSTEIN: Yes. How about that? Where'd you get that information?

GARDNER: Out of those document boxes I told you were at UCLA.

EPSTEIN: Yes, I succeeded him. He and I and several others were the founding members.

GARDNER: Well, we can talk about that when we get through the list, perhaps, about how it happened to be founded.

EPSTEIN: And also '52 was the year that Dale bought out Holmes. Mr. Harelick moved to Melrose, which is simply entered here just for the record. There was a circulating library which did a very big business, called Guild Rental Library, at 7208 Hollywood Boulevard, which is just east of La

Brea. And the man who ran it--I forget his name--used to buy books from us, and from time to time we'd have some dealings of one kind or another. He used to rent a lot of books to studios for reading, for the readers, whereas we used to rent a lot of books to studios for background, for movie sets. They would lease them to the readers for reading purposes. When they got a story they were interested in, instead of buying the book, this man would loan it out to them. At that time there were a lot of people still going to circulating libraries. But it was a dying business, and eventually he had to sell it off or get rid of his stock.

I notice that's the year that Milton Luboviski parted company with Ida Needham. Have I talked to you about the Needhams?

GARDNER: No.

EPSTEIN: Ida Needham's husband was Wilbur. Wilbur was totally deaf. She, of course, was his mouthpiece and his ears. Wilbur was a very literary person. He did some book reviewing for the Times when Paul Jordan-Smith was editor of the Times book page. They opened a store, for secondhand books, during the bad years. They had a struggle. They fought their way up and established a pretty fair business, which later was in Brentwood on San Vicente.

GARDNER: Was this after the association with Luboviski?

EPSTEIN: Yes.

GARDNER: I see.

EPSTEIN: Ida had worked around in various bookstores from time to time. She'd worked for Milton and some of the others. Ida was a very good bookwoman, and Wilbur knew his bookstores and he knew how to hunt out books. But they were never in the big time in the book business. Number one, they weren't too businesslike; and Wilbur, of course, had this horrible handicap of not being able to hear. Wilbur was very social conscious. Of course, Ida was, too, but not to the degree that Wilbur was. I wouldn't be surprised that Wilbur at one time might have been a member of the [Communist] party. He used to come into my place. He was always going around looking for books for the shop or for others or for customers. And we'd sell him a lot of books.

But he became angry with me, for this reason: there was a group started up in our store who were going to have a strike, which never got off its feet. And apparently he was familiar with the background of it. And the reason it never did get off its feet--it probably wouldn't have gotten off its feet for more reasons than the one that's given. And the reason for its immediate failure was that the attorney we hired to represent us against the union researched most everybody, and he discovered that their leader was a chap working for us for a time, but not for long, by the name of [Robert] Klonsky.

TAPE NUMBER: X, SIDE TWO

JULY 15, 1974

GARDNER: I'm waiting with bated breath for the end of the sentence. [laughter]

EPSTEIN: Klonsky was a Communist from way back. His picture appeared in an early issue of Life magazine as a very young man. He would be the picture of a Communist, you might picture, of a Communist of the twenties--wild hair and wild eyes. I suppose they might have gotten the picture during wild circumstances, too. But at any rate, he was that. The attorney we had for us, of course, researched the leaders, the people for it, and he brought that information to the [Retail] Clerks' Union. "Here is your leader; here's his picture; here's the documentation on him." And the strike threat collapsed.* They couldn't have organized our place anyway because the people there didn't want to go to any union. (Remind me to get back to Wilbur, which was where the story started.)

* Strike threat occurred around the first week of December 1957. Our attorneys were Sheppard, Mullin, Richter, Balthis & Hampton. Working with them from their offices was a labor relations counselor by the name of Jack McDowell. He was the one we worked very closely with. The Retail Clerks International Association (affiliated with AFL-CIO) representative was Mel Rubin. Local 777. Curious comment can be made that local 777 was a good customer of Pickwick, and continued to buy books from Pickwick through the entire controversy, and remained a good customer, and probably still is.--[L.E.]

But while I'm on this strike business, this Klonsky had just been hired about two months before. He claimed that he had a little bookstore in Philadelphia, and anyone with a little bit of experience, we were very happy to have. Well, I never bothered to ask anybody what kind of a bookstore it was. It happened to be the same kind of a radical-book store as the Lincoln Bookstore, or whatever the--what is the one called here now, the People's Bookstore? I don't think the People's Bookstore here now represents the Communist party the way that those bookstores were really arms of the party in those days because the party, of course, is not near as strong now as it was then. They don't have the money.

At any rate, within three weeks, four weeks, we had a strike on our hands--or the threat of a strike. Well, at any rate, we blocked it. Apparently, there was a coterie, an association. Immediately, we lost the goodwill of a segment of dealers and a segment of our customers--for no reason at all except that there was the threat of a strike and that the strike did not succeed. I received a few nasty letters, and they were not from the people who I. . . . One of them was from a person who'd been a customer for years. Apparently, they did have sort of an underground, which was connected, perhaps because of him--Klonsky. Word got around from directions which I never had heard of. And apparently Wilbur was involved in some way--not associated but knew these

people well enough to come to me one day and cuss me out for being a capitalist. And he never came back to our shop. We were very good friends. I'd befriended him on many occasions. I loaned him money, and I actually gave him money when they were starving. But that cut no ice with him. I was a capitalist. I was a no-good capitalist.

GARDNER: At what point was this?

EPSTEIN: Well, let me see. It would be in 1958.

GARDNER: Who was your attorney?

EPSTEIN: I can't think of him. [See note.] I haven't seen or talked to him in [years]. I had to hire a special labor attorney. My attorney advised me to seek him out, and I did. I got him through some people here in Hollywood who had had similar trouble. I can't think of his name.

GARDNER: So back to Wilbur Needham.

EPSTEIN: That was one incident where it really hurt--not my pride, but I thought that I was unjustly accused of doing a bad thing. I don't think I did a bad thing because operating a bookstore under a union, especially with what the unions are trying to do now in bookstores, would be an almost impossible task. At least, I thought so at the time, and I still think so. At that time, it was even worse, because of the demands they make. They came in with a series of demands: to have a policy in the business, and to even have a right to reject certain books--which is totally impossible to run the kind of a bookstore I want and the kind

of a bookstore any reasonable man would want to run if he wanted to be independent, have an independent mind of his own. At any rate, the thing fell through. Wilbur was angry with me and really told me off in no uncertain terms that I was a goddamned capitalist. I used to bump into Ida every so often in book places. I did bump into Wilbur once or twice over the years, but we just exchanged hello, nothing beyond that. But Ida probably was a little bit more open-minded on the subject, and she used to come in when she needed something or when she thought she had something that we might need. But I never saw their shop that they opened. I understand it's a very nice shop.

GARDNER: Well, they've moved now from Brentwood.

EPSTEIN: When Wilbur died, Ida sold the shop, and it's now moved to Westwood Boulevard, 2000 block something. I'm trying to think of the name of the couple that own it. I'll get you the name. It should be in the record right now. [tape stopped] The Needham Bookshop is now the Needham Book Finders. Ida sold out to the Needham Book Finders, the [Stanley and Eleanor] Kurmans. And they belong to the Antiquarian Booksellers now. They're running a nice shop. They do some library business, of course, like most of the old-book shops have to these days.

Well, that's the story of Wilbur and Ida Needham. I was fond of Wilbur, and that's why it hurt me so much. You know, some things you pass off, but it hurt my pride and it

hurt my feeling of friendship. We were really friendly to him. We went out of our way to give him deals, and when they went in the old-book business, sometimes when [there was] something we couldn't deal in, they could. We recommended them at every turn. We did the most we could--because it was a hardship. The man had an extreme handicap. Perhaps it was the handicap that made him more bitter than perhaps some other people. But he was a true idealist. The fact that he expressed his idealism in that form--well, like a great many others. I don't know; the full history isn't told yet. It takes a couple of hundred years, maybe, to find out actually which system is better. And it also proved to me that it was still a very active party. Within days of the whole thing, I started getting nasty letters from people and phony phone calls. "Come out to such and such an address; we've got a big library." We'd get out there, and there was no such address. It strictly emanated from that, which, of course, reminds me of the time when Hollywood had a powerful commune here before and after the Hollywood Ten incident. They were quite arrogant when they thought they were in power, almost as arrogant as the Birchers were when they thought they were in power--you know, taking a book and throwing it on the floor: "Why in the hell are you selling this fascist book?" Or "Nazi book" or whatever. And it's only fascist and Nazi because they said so. Maybe the man's leanings were that way. I don't

know. But they weren't that bad, except that they said it. And by the same token: "Why don't you put this one in the window?" when it was somebody they liked--which is exactly the same tactics that the Birchers used, except the Birchers used to write more letters and [have] more direct phone calls saying, "Close my account." They didn't write nasty letters. They would write nasty letters in the sense that, "I won't trade with you now; you're a traitor to your country," but not nasty letters, in the sense that they called you names or things of that nature, which was the other type. But the extremes go to extremes, which of course has taught me--and would teach anyone who was a reasonable person--a lesson: stay away from extremes. There's room for everybody. Stay away from extremes. Extremes are dangerous in many ways. In politics, in science, you have to find a means of doing things which is reasonable, to make it fit into the machinery or change the machinery when you can, but you have to mesh into the machinery for everyday living. And there's a certain way of having the machinery changed--or repaired, you might say--to do a better job this way or the other.

As far as politics was concerned, I was almost apolitical, in the sense that parties themselves were meaningless terms to me in most cases. When I did vote, I would vote for the man. I was a registered Democrat. You have to pick one party or another, and my leanings were more for the

Democratic ideas rather than the Republican. But if the Republicans put up a man like Warren, I voted for Warren--or [Goodwin J.] Knight--rather than whoever the Democrats had at the time. Even to this day, people ask me who I'll vote for. I'll wait and see and listen to the guy for a while rather than say, "Well, I'm a Democrat. I have to vote for the Democratic party." Well, that's quite an aside from where we were.

That's the story of my relations with the Needhams. Curiously, I bumped into Ida. She was in the shop several years ago, before I retired. The year before I retired--about three years ago. And we had quite a nice visit together. When Wilbur died, I sent her a nice letter, telling her how much I admired his knowledge and the fact that he put up such a fine struggle to do what he wanted to do in the book business. I didn't say anything about the fact that we had our differences. Because I did admire him: I admired his courage, and I admired his literary knowledge and his taste for books. He was one of the first ones to pick up Steinbeck with his first book; he picked him as a comer. He had all the early Steinbecks, which later became very valuable. And he became acquainted with Steinbeck. He had a lot of autographed Steinbeck material, which I imagine Ida still has. Well, that's that.

In 1952 we noticed that Milton Luboviski and Ida had separated. I'm not sure whether Ida just worked for him or

whether it was a partnership.

GARDNER: At that point the shop is Milton Luboviski's, isn't it?

EPSTEIN: Yes. Larry Edmunds.

GARDNER: What's happened to Larry Edmunds in the meantime?

EPSTEIN: Didn't I mention when I spoke of Stanley Rose that Larry Edmunds later had committed suicide?

GARDNER: Oh, he did, too?

EPSTEIN: It's a curious thing. Milton Luboviski's first wife--he and his first wife was divorced, and Larry Edmunds married her. Later on they had problems, and next we heard that Larry had committed suicide. Larry, I think, was involved to some degree, involved in the [Communist] party. I heard rumblings that that in some way led to his suicide. Now, I've never heard the full details, and I offer this statement only as something that I heard. But I'm convinced in my own mind that he was involved with the party, because the actions and reactions to the Russian-United States relationship was such that you could feel it--the way they reacted to something that Russia did and the way they reacted to something the United States did versus Russia. There was quite a colony here in Hollywood, and anybody that denies it isn't so. . . . Not that I feel that the Hollywood Ten were treated properly, because I think they were not. And I knew them all. And 80 percent of them that I knew were Communists, but two of them I was not too

well acquainted with. They were all customers of ours. I never approved of the treatment they got. But they were; there was no question in my mind that they were. The fact that it was nobody's business whether they were or not is something else again. To be condemned for what they were years later was wrong. That's the way they felt and that's the way it was.

But there was that colony which was related to that particular Luboviski and Larry Edmunds bookstore when they were partners. Now, to what extent Milton was involved in those days, I don't know, but there's no question in my mind that he has no use for them now.

There at one time was an Anti-Nazi League, as you remember. And they had a bookstore on Fairfax for a short time. A lot of the Hollywood people were supporting it, and of course the Anti-Nazi League were fighting Nazis. We paid membership dues for a while, because, well, we used to think. . . . But there was a strong Commie group in it, and they were prepared to use it only as it affected Russia versus Germany. It was all for a second front, for the United States to come in right away. Of course, when things got turned around, it was exactly the opposite later. When the second front had to be extended to the Pacific area, they were not there. Well, at any rate, that's a digression from bookselling. But it was part of the Hollywood scene.

GARDNER: To get back to the bookselling, Milton Luboviski

runs the store to this day, right?

EPSTEIN: He's loyal to Larry Edmunds's name. It's run to this day. Milton is a top authority on books pertaining to the movies and movie people and so forth. He did a lot of appraising work for movie writers when it was the fashion to give things to some charitable institution. For instance, a writer had a lot of scripts, and they were valued at x number of dollars, given to USC, for instance, where they have a school of motion pictures--or whatever they call it--and also UCLA, to get a tax deduction for it. But I think the government has stepped in on that and is not as liberal in the tax allowances for that type of thing. [tape stopped] Milton has done a lot of appraising work as an official appraiser, as a licensed appraiser. And he is an authority on certain types of books, especially the film arts and some theater. He does an international business.

GARDNER: Well, it's an area that's become extremely topical.

EPSTEIN: He specializes mostly with libraries all over the world. It seems like every country that gains a little bit of independence wants to become thoroughly cultured, so they establish a motion picture department. He's listed in all the bibliographies and directories, I suppose, for that kind of thing. So they approach him or they had heard of him or they had been here. We have had many groups of motion picture people visiting the Pickwick during my time,

where there were a group of motion picture people sent by the government. And we have sold many books to such groups and shipped them to the government. But he has a lot of old things.

GARDNER: And he's one of the only ones that specializes in that, too.

EPSTEIN: One of the only ones--yes, one of the few that specializes. There are a few others. But he has accumulated a tremendous stock of that thing, and he has them in identifiable order--which is the big thing. So if they ask for something, he can immediately tell them. But his prices--maybe it shouldn't be in the record--are quite high. And he admits they're high. He says, "Well, where else are you going to get it?"--which I suppose is right to do.

GARDNER: Supply and demand.

EPSTEIN: To come back to another year, '53, I want to go on record with the name of Joe Chevalier, who started a small business on Larchmont Boulevard, still going there--Chevalier's Bookstore. Very nice chap. One reason I want him to be on the record is that he later became the president of the local new-book sellers' group. Not an overly ambitious person in the sense that he wants to expand his business. He has no family to provide for, so he just enjoys a good small business on Larchmont, south of Beverly, in that old area there. Well, that is about all I have from the

record. I'll have to do some more research, maybe, to bring it up to date.

GARDNER: Well, at your leisure.

EPSTEIN: At my leisure? Who has leisure anymore?

GARDNER: Well, I'll take the list that I have of the antiquarians. For the oral record, Mel Royer gave a document box full of old papers. Apparently he was secretary to the antiquarian society during those early years.

EPSTEIN: Yes, he was. He's a past president of the antiquarians, too, later on.

GARDNER: And perhaps the most interesting piece of information in there was the first listing of the Southern California Antiquarian Booksellers [Association], which was 1950. Now, many of these names we've gone through. But there are some I think perhaps we could discuss in more detail, or there might be some who got left out here and there. So as long as I have this list handy. . . . And then when we get through with that, we can go into the background of the Antiquarian [Booksellers Association] and the founding of the organization. Well, the first few are Ernest Gottlieb, whom we did; Max Hunley, whom we did; Harry Levinson; and Walter E. Neuman. Did we talk about him?

EPSTEIN: Walter E. Neuman.

GARDNER: He was on Le Doux in Beverly Hills. Do you recall him?

EPSTEIN: I recall him. I don't know if I got Gottlieb

and Neuman confused. They were both German refugees.

GARDNER: Gottlieb was music.

EPSTEIN: Gottlieb was music.

GARDNER: Neuman was old maps and prints.

EPSTEIN: Right. So I did get it right. Gottlieb was music. Yes. Neuman was old maps and prints, and he would appear at book auctions and book sales and buy anything with colored plates in it and colored maps. At one time we competed with each other at a sale. I got a few things, but he got the bulk of it because he was a specialist. I would sell it as a book, where he might take the book apart and sell it as plates.

GARDNER: He was at 132 North Le Doux in Beverly Hills at the time.

EPSTEIN: Yeah. Then he later moved out to Melrose. He had a small store on Melrose near Robertson; 132 Le Doux is a residence. He was operating from his home at first.

GARDNER: Is he still in business at all?

EPSTEIN: I don't know. I never hear of them. I'm inclined to doubt it.

GARDNER: Well, we did Kurt Schwarz. The next one that's listed is in Claremont, of all places. It's called the Claremont Book and Art Shop.

EPSTEIN: A chap by the name of [Samuel L.] Brier. Brier as a bookseller came out here from New York. And he settled in Claremont. He wanted to be in a college community. And

he operated a small bookstore there--no great shakes. He was a peculiar type of person in the sense that he wasn't out to be a real bookman. I wouldn't call him a poseur, but he wanted to be intelligentsia. But he wasn't quite. He wanted that atmosphere. And if he was happy there, of course, that was his privilege. He used to come in town; he used to come to meetings occasionally. And actually at one time we had a meeting, when Charlie Yale was at Claremont.

GARDNER: At Griswold's or Claremont Inn or something.

EPSTEIN: Right. That was a sort of memorial meeting. Brier was there and I think he furnished the refreshments for that meeting, because it was his community. They were nice people, but I never considered him as a real major book person.

GARDNER: I was curious seeing it. I wondered how extensive a book market there would be in Claremont.

EPSTEIN: Well, theoretically, because of the college, there should be some book market. Of course, there weren't as many colleges then as there are now. There wasn't [an extensive book market]. The college community wasn't big enough, apparently, or maybe he was not the right person to draw them. You know, it takes a marriage of two. There are many small college communities where a good bookstore has been established simply because the person operating it had the type of rapport with the college community and

the town community to establish enough business to make a nice go of it. There were several in New England. There was one woman in particular. I can't think of her name or the name of the bookstore. She ran a bookstore under a trade name of some kind, so-and-so bookstore--somewhere in a town with a famous girls' college, and I don't even remember the college, whether it was Smith or somewhere. But it can be done. I already mentioned that; it has been done in many areas. But I don't think he was quite the person.

GARDNER: Next is Bechtold, whom we've discussed. He was in Culver City at the time, doing mostly book search. And after that is Arthur Clark, who was in Glendale.

EPSTEIN: Arthur H. Clark.

GARDNER: Yes. We talked about Arthur H. Clark, but in a very limited way.

EPSTEIN: Arthur H. Clark--his business was established in Cleveland many, many years ago. He published Americana. A lot of his books were brought to him by amateur historians and other historians, and he would publish them in nice editions. And his trade was mostly to libraries. And then he also dealt in old books of Americana, mostly Western. In the thirties--I forget which year--he moved to the Los Angeles area, bought a place in Glendale. They continued their business there and did a lot of printing. They did considerably more books here, I think, than they did in the Cleveland area. They did an excellent job of it and

continued to be in the old- and rare-book business. I always considered them to be high priced, but apparently they sold enough books to continue in business. Their business is now on South Brand Boulevard. It's the son now who owns the business. And I don't think he himself is participating in the business too much. What's the name? Garrity or something? [P.W. Gallaher]

GARDNER: No, that's not there.

EPSTEIN: They've always been friendly to the booksellers. Clark--I call him young Clark, as distinguishable from the father, who died many years ago--participates in the Los Angeles Corral, keeps his contacts with all the important Western collectors and Western writers. They're still publishing books. They publish a lot of excellent series.

GARDNER: The next one is another person who's in Glendale--who I suspect was fairly minor--John Valentine.

EPSTEIN: John Valentine actually was not a bookman in the sense that he operated a store. I forget now who he backed--Jake or who. I think it was Jake and he had quite close relations. He made his money, I believe, in the food business some way. And he came out here, and his relationship was in the sense that he backed--by golly, if my memory doesn't fail me, it <u>was</u> Jake. And he used to come around the bookstores, almost as a dealer--usually not alone, but with somebody else. And I think he was a collector on his own for a while. Whatever happened to him, I don't really know.

GARDNER: The next after John Valentine was Karl Zamboni.

EPSTEIN: Karl Zamboni is a long, long story.

GARDNER: Oh, good.

EPSTEIN: Well, I don't know if I can remember it all. It goes way back. Karl Zamboni and Phil Brown had each worked, I think, at one time for Holmes during the real bad Depression days. Later on, somehow or other they raised enough money to buy the Abbey. At one time they owned the Abbey Bookshop. There was somebody else's money, of course, in it. It was a peculiar mix-up there, and I never did get the facts totally straight. Jake, I'm sure, was closer to the situation than I can recollect it. But at any rate, one of their backers was a music writer here for many, many years who wrote a lot of fine music for the movies (and I'll be darned if I can think of his name; if I'm not mistaken, it began with an A). [Lee Harline] He died rather young, about ten years ago. Well, this musician divorced his wife and married Zamboni's wife, and the musician's wife married Zamboni. They swapped wives, the backers.

GARDNER: [laughing] That was really before their time. It was very avant-garde.

EPSTEIN: Yes, well, there were people like that then. Later on, they sold out the business. Zamboni kicked around the book business quite a while. I think he worked for Jake for a while, then he worked for Kovach for a while. And Phil Brown--he fooled around with books, too. He was

married to Helen Brown. Helen Brown was a cookbook writer, and she was a caterer in Pasadena [with] a very fine reputation for knowledge of cookery. And Phil started collecting cookbooks for her, and they formed a fine collection. And then Helen wrote a number of books which were published, and some of them got national recognition. Phil Brown later went to work for Charlie Yale in Pasadena. And when the father died--older Charlie Yale--the son Bud took over. (His name was Charlie, but everyone called him Bud.) He was working with Phil. Phil was, I think, more knowledgeable of books than Bud Yale was, so they worked together for quite a while.* And then Phil left Charlie Yale and went to work with his wife in the catering business. They used to have a party every New Year's, and we attended several of them. But the house was just packed with cookery books--besides other books. Phil had wide interests. He was a literary person, and she, too, besides her knowledge of cookery. They both wrote. They wrote a couple of things together. But she died, unfortunately, about ten years ago or so, and Phil was left with all the books and with the business--which I think he gave up because she was the one people hired because of her reputation as a cook.** When you went to their house for a New Year's party,

---

* Actually Phil had a piece of the business because it was later called Yale and Brown for a while.--[L.E.]

** I find that Phil is in the catering business.--[L.E.]

you got some beautiful food. So that, starting with Zamboni, brought me back.

I lost track of Zamboni. I don't know where he is now. I mentioned Zamboni's name to Jake a number of months ago, and he said, "Well, he's somewhere up north." Zamboni was a good bookman; he knew his books. But he didn't have that strength of character to stick with something. I think he was a moody person, psychological in some ways, maybe. But a nice person. I do not mean that he was a no-good person. He was a good person. I'm sorry I can't think of the name of that musician who took part in that exchange. It begins with A. Not Albright. I don't know his name.

GARDNER: We'll try to come back to it.

EPSTEIN: I'll crack my head.

GARDNER: A fellow named John Cole had a place in La Jolla and was the only San Diego person who was involved in the Antiquarians.

EPSTEIN: It was called the John Cole Bookstore. He and his wife ran a shop in La Jolla. It was a nice little shop. They had half new books and half old books. He died, unfortunately, too young. I think he worked for Marshall Field before he went into the service. I'm racking back into my brain the stories I heard. One of the salesmen selling for Merriam-Webster, whose name may come up later--Russell Goodrich--and he were great friends. They went in the army together, and I believe Russell at one time told

me that John had worked in the book department of Marshall Field. And when they got out of the service, Goodrich and Cole thought of opening a business together, but they were afraid they didn't have the capital, afraid that they couldn't support their families. Russ had children who were a little older than John's, I think; John may not have had any children at that time. At any rate, they did whatever they did after the war. Finally, John came out here and opened up a business in La Jolla. And he did a nice business. La Jolla, you know, has several small bookstores--none of them great bookstores, but little shops. Each one specializes in some kind of thing. I think his wife's name is Margaret [actually Barbara]. She was more or less adopted by the big family, the main family there, the Scrippses. Mrs. Scripps sort of took her under her wing and I think perhaps might even have helped them out. I did hear that the Scripps woman helped to educate their children; they paid for their college education and whatnot. Margaret Cole is still down there. John, as I said, died. I used to see him once in a while. I remember we were at La Jolla one time, and Russell Goodrich, who was a Merriam-Webster salesman for dictionaries, happened to be in town. And we met, and Ann and I took them all to dinner. We just happened to be at the racquet club there, the tennis club--the La Jolla Tennis Club or whatever they call it. We were surprised that we got in because it was not too

open for Jews. We heard that later. But we walked in, and they had room for us. And we had a very nice apartment, incidentally, and we stayed there a week.

GARDNER: Oh, you stayed at the tennis club?

EPSTEIN: Yes.

GARDNER: You never signed the register. [laughter]

EPSTEIN: Oh, I signed the register. [laughter] So I know her quite well in the sense that whenever I go there I visit her, and whenever she has a problem, she even writes me. She, too, is inclined to be overstocked. But she specializes in everything: sewing things for women and all the latest fads--macrame and all that. She gets the material and sells it along with books. But she's horribly overstocked in books. She doesn't return what she should return, which is one of the things she asked me about. I said, "Look, you're always asking me and I'm always telling you, but you never do it. I see the same books I told you three years ago to return, and you didn't do it. You certainly can't return them now." But apparently she's still getting by, so there's no problem there. But they were a nice couple.

GARDNER: The next on my list comes to Los Angeles, and it's the Abbey Bookstore. Of course, you've talked about the Abbey Bookstore to such a great extent. But at the time of this, there was someone named Pináns.

EPSTEIN: They had the Spanish Bookstore for a while. Then

they got rid of that and went into the Spanish Bookstore, later moved. Yeah. Juan Pináns. He was a very nice person. His wife was Jewish; they were very much in love. I used to see her quite often. She, I think, was a legal secretary, if I'm not mistaken. And he ran a small business in Spanish books. There were certain Spanish things that we would buy from him. He always tried to keep one or two Spanish cookbooks, which we would buy from him at wholesale. And there were a few other small items he would wholesale. He would import them, and it would be easier for us to buy them from him than to send to Spain or wherever he got them. They were nice people. But he died about seven, eight years ago, and the poor widow, she didn't know what to do with his stock. Finally she sold the business to somebody else. She was really broken-hearted. I don't know what happened to her. She probably went back to work. She's a very capable legal secretary; they're hard to find.

GARDNER: Well, the next few on my list I think we've gone into pretty well. They're Argonaut, and Bennett and Marshall, and John Q. Burch. We spoke of all of those. And then comes Dale's, which of course we talked about. It mentions here that his wife was also active. Dale's wife, I assume. Celia Dalinsky? Or is that not his wife. Who is Celia Dalinsky?

EPSTEIN: Celia Dalinsky must have been his sister. Harry's

wife actually was Irish.

GARDNER: Oh, his sister, I see.

EPSTEIN: Because she was not his wife.

GARDNER: Oh, I see. It says, "Harry Dale and Celia Dalinsky, genealogy and local history." Don't know her, huh? Never came to the meetings?

EPSTEIN: Well, I knew Harry's name had been Dalinsky in Milwaukee or somewhere he came from. He came from the Middle West--Detroit or Milwaukee, I forget which. Yes, I remember that a sister of his was involved in some way. But I don't think she stayed in the business too long.

GARDNER: She just wanted a membership in the society?

EPSTEIN: Yes. Well, I didn't know her too well. I met her.

GARDNER: Then Dawson's, of course, we talked about. Then N.A. Kovach. Do you know him?

EPSTEIN: Oh, Nick Kovach? Of course, I knew Nick Kovach. Nick was around when I moved around to Eighth Street. He followed me, I think, by two or three years. He used to dabble in old books. He'd run across things, sell them to other dealers. He was a smart guy. He later opened a store--I forget what the name of the store was. I wonder if that was the store that Sarah Borden and Manny Borden bought out? At any rate, they had a store on Sixth Street for a while. He got rid of that; then I remember he got into a partnership with. . . . I'll think of the name. [snaps fingers]

Carl Haverlin. And they opened a store on Wilshire Boulevard on the second floor of a little nice old building there. Rents were cheap there. And they were going to have a rare-book business. Nick was a very erratic person at that time. In some ways, he's erratic still. I remember going up there, buying some things from them and selling some things to them. The partnership didn't work out. It ended in a great disagreement. The partnership didn't last. Nick went on wheeling and dealing--wholesale, retail, whatever. Finally, he found his way into the business of old periodicals--not single-copy magazines, not the old magazine business in that sense, but periodicals of runs, literary periodicals or technical periodicals, supplying new libraries, replacing for old libraries. In the later forties, especially, and the fifties, that became extremely big business, because there were a tremendous number of new libraries opening up and a tremendous spread in research institutions per se. And they all needed back files of especially technical periodicals, historical periodicals. And the people who went into that business did quite well. Nick used to go around to libraries and buy their duplicates or their discards. And for a long time he gave the book association a lot of trouble, because when he would go in, he would say, "Well, I'll take these, and I will give you so much in trade." Well, a library would never be able to contact him for what they needed in books.

So they used to write letters to the association. [laughter]

TAPE NUMBER: XI, SIDE ONE

JULY 29, 1974

GARDNER: As I mentioned when we left off, we had a couple of names left on this list of the original Antiquarians, the 1950 list, and just to run through them and finish off. We finished off last time with Nick Kovach. Is there anything else you want to say about him?

EPSTEIN: I believe I mentioned all the things that I wanted to say about Nick. Nick became very successful in his way. He's established a fine business and I think is pretty happy with his career--considering that when I first met him, he was, like we all were, pretty sort of starving characters in those days. In that sense, I admire his perseverance and building up a sort of a new business. He did a good job.

GARDNER: The next one on the list that I have is Cambridge Bookshop.

EPSTEIN: The Cambridge--Salzman was his name. He never established a large business, but his business has maintained him for all these many years. It's still in existence. He dealt more with scholarly books, more literary things, and I imagine it's probably part of his plan not to have a great big shop--and just control his own working hours more, where you can't in a big bookshop. And that's

why I think some of these smaller dealers perhaps might have been smarter than the larger dealers who tie themselves down to a big business, or were tied down with a big business and a lot of employees. Some of us made a little more money, but in the end, I think they got what they wanted and we got what we wanted. And there, too, the family relationships sometimes are a deciding factor in how far a person wants to go in this business. People with several children whom they have to educate have to strive to do more business, where a chap like Salzman doesn't need it. He leads the kind of life he likes, and I think that's very agreeable. He's a good bookman. I shouldn't forget to say that, because when one old bookman can say about another old bookman, "He's a pretty good bookman," then he's gotten his degree. [laughter]

GARDNER: Next after that is Larry Edmunds, and of course we talked about him. We talked about him, and we talked about the shop, and we talked about both Milton Luboviski and Ida Needham.

EPSTEIN: Yes.

GARDNER: Then after that was Lee Freeson.

EPSTEIN: Lee Freeson is sort of a maverick--as I suppose most bookmen are; otherwise they wouldn't be in the old-book business. That's the place where mavericks, a great many, wind up. It's a place where a maverick can operate his own style, his own way, and still make a living at it. This is

a great thing about the old-book business. I don't think you could do it in the new-book business because the investment, the original investment to start, is so great for a new-book business. But in the old-book business a person can start with half a dozen books, and sell two of them, and go out and buy four more, and in that way begin to become general or specialized, whichever he wants.

But Lee is an odd character. It's very difficult to describe him. I can describe him only as he relates to the book business. He built up a very interesting facet of it. Unlike Milton, [who handled] the movies and some theater, he specialized solely in the theater and some books relating to theater: fashion as it relates to theater, and costume, all the related areas--dance. His wife Margo--or common-law wife, maybe--was a dancer, an excellent dancer.* But she was very political, and if she didn't like the audience in front of her, she'd walk off the stage. And poor Lee would go with her and have to suffer through all that. By that I don't mean to indicate that this Margo was in any way unappreciated, but if she thought her audience wasn't worth the struggle that she was putting through, why, she would just walk off the stage. And, of course, it hurt her career immensely.

Lee suffered terribly during the difficult days because there was no market for the type of thing he had to

* Do not confuse this Margo with the actress Margo who is married to Eddie Albert--both of whom were customers of ours.--[L.E.]

offer at that time, and she was having a very difficult time. She was, as I say, political, extreme left, and probably Communist party. And I'm not saying so to hurt Lee in any sense--his reputation. But I think that both were extreme left--at least, if not party members. I have no way of knowing positively, but I do know that they both were extreme left. That, of course, is not the point of our conversation--politics. But he did build up an enviable reputation. The main thing in my eyes is not that he built up money or more money. I don't know whether Lee has any money. But he built up an enviable reputation as an authority in his field--looked upon with a great deal of respect for the knowledge he has. And he and I, being more or less neighbors, and knowing him from way back in the old days downtown, we always had an informally close relationship--not that we visited back and forth but we were always glad to see each other in spite of our differences of opinion on many, many things. I used to fight with him like anything about his politics. But still I respected the man, and it happened to be my lot to have to help him out on many occasions when he needed a few bucks, either for a business deal or to get by on for a month or two. And he always came back--sometimes a year or two late, sometimes I had to press a little bit, but those were the way things were. I just met him a couple of weeks ago, and we had quite a talk and reminisced a little bit. He's the exact age that I am. His

main fear now--it's not a fear, it's a knowledge that he's going to have to quit within two years, five years, eight years, and there's no way he can transmit his knowledge to anyone else. It was always a one-man operation. And when he dies, it's going to die with him. He always operated individually, never employed anybody. He told me of many letters he received from universities asking him to come and lecture to them. Of course he wouldn't do that about the theater, but theater bibliography. And he's not a scientific bibliographer, by any means, but he has all this knowledge about the important books just because of specializing in one narrow field. Of course, the theater is not as narrow as, say, shells. I don't know, maybe it's narrower; I have no idea.

GARDNER: And he's going to carry this with him to his grave?

EPSTEIN: Right. That's the unfortunate thing about so many booksellers: they develop over the years a knowledge, a specialized knowledge, a specialized memory; and if they're very independent, they usually work alone or pretty close to alone. They might hire a secretary or so, but that's not a book person. They don't train anybody. And probably they haven't the patience to train anybody. Not that they're secretive; they just don't want to work with anyone. They're loners; they want to work alone. That's their choice. And unfortunately a great deal of knowledge, research, is lost. It goes back into limbo. Somebody'll have to rediscover it

again years later. And he never issued catalogs particularly. Very often a dealer, a specialized person, will spill a lot of bibliographical knowledge in his catalogs, little points that he himself has discovered while perusing a book. I have two books, exactly the same book, on my shelf, and every catalog says that they're both first editions, that this is the first edition. On examining them, I can point to you several different differences, where type has been broken--in one issue, perfect type, and the other issue, broken--and the brightness of the plates. But by the bibliographical standards, they're both alike. They're not alike. One of them must have come out years before the other.

GARDNER: What is the book?

EPSTEIN: It's not an important first edition; it's rather common. But nobody makes any distinction. And there are many areas, if somebody would go through it. . . . I made a few notes on it, which were so apparent that even I could recognize them without looking for them. I didn't have any reason to go through that book. To Have and to Hold, by Mary Johnson. It's not a rare book in any sense, and it's an important book as a good historical novel. But these are the kinds of things that one discovers by chance. And these become of bibliographical importance.

To go back to Lee, he has an exceptionally good specialized knowledge. He was just almost in tears telling

me about the fact that he has no way of putting it all down. People have asked him to write a book, and he said, "Louis, how can I sit down and write a book? I can't sit still long enough to finish a meal." He's that kind of a person. And he's having a problem with Margo. She has arthritis very badly, and sometimes she can't get out of bed. He has to take care of her. But that's another issue. That is the story of Lee. He is not always a likable character, not always a totally dependable character, but by and large he did something.

GARDNER: The next on the list is Larson's and I think we talked about Larson.

EPSTEIN: Yes, I think we mentioned Larson. He had his shop on Hollywood Boulevard west of Western, first block west of Western. He's an odd person, and he went into metaphysics a lot. He loved his cats and his coffee, and he just sat there. And I think probably one of the reasons he died at an early age, he probably wasn't active enough physically--which is hard to say about a bookman. I could never be inactive physically when I was in the old-book business, or even the new-book business. I moved around. But he developed a metaphysical business, I think from the ground up. I don't think he had any original knowledge of it. And he just, little by little, from what the people asked for, he learned to sell, and he learned the values by knowing what he could get, how high he could push the price up.

And of course that makes value: how much is a customer willing to pay for a rare book? Not all his things were rare, but they were good secondhand things. It was not a used-book shop in the classic sense, where they had a good variety of stock in many subjects. It was run pretty messy. And his widow [Louise Larson] ran it for several years. I was much surprised that she was able to carry it on, but she kept plugging at it. You had to admire her. She used to come to see me quite often and buy things from us occasionally. We would buy from her occasionally, and she had great respect for me. She would ask me questions on what she should do as a matter of policy, or her business, and I always tried to be very helpful. And she appreciated that. I think the book people thought that I had a great deal more wisdom than I really have. [laughter]

GARDNER: After that one, I have Dr. Kurt Melander.

EPSTEIN: Dr. Kurt Melander. He was a refugee. He's still around, although I haven't seen him in a number of years. A refugee from Germany, I think he went to South America before he came to North America, the United States. And he learned the Spanish language there. Or he may even have lived in Spain; I don't know. My impression is that he may have told me this: that he went to South America when they had to run into whatever corridor was open. At any rate, he learned Spanish fairly well. And having a doctorate to begin with and a well-rounded background of knowledge, he began

to work with Spanish books. There was a field in which the dealers here knew little about, he knew something about. And he began to pick up whatever Spanish things there were around, and visited libraries, and built up a small business, which maintained him, of selling Spanish books. And he would buy also English books, too, but primarily he went in for Spanish literature, which he would sell to libraries--catalog, or by letter--and maintained himself not badly. He's a very nice, quiet person. He paid me a very fine compliment on the last occasion I saw him. I bumped into him at the Pickwick, oh, just before I retired. And we got to talking. When we had old books he was there at least once or twice a week. And we got to talking about a number of things and the fact that we had known each other for at least twenty-some-odd years, and he paid me a compliment. He said, "You know, I watched you progress from way back in a small bookstore to a business far beyond what you probably yourself had ever anticipated, and the way you ran it and the success of it." He said he always had great admiration for me in the way I treated him and the way I maintained my business, and he said he wanted to tell me that. And two days later I got a little card from him saying how much he enjoyed knowing me. I think he works out somewhere in the Valley now. I remember one time I visited him in North Orange Grove. [tape stopped]

GARDNER: Okay, is that it on him? Well, Pickwick is

next, and I think we've talked about Pickwick. Then comes F.N. Bassett. Do you know F.N. Bassett?

EPSTEIN: Well, Bassett was what I would call a specialist dealer, and his specialty was nature books, in a very narrow field. There again is an illustration of what a person can do. At one time it was as a hobby. I don't know what his profession was, whether he was a teacher or what, but he just decided that he would expand on it and make it his business. And he did. I didn't know too much about him personally. We used to sell him things in his field from the old-book department. Whenever we'd get something, he'd buy from us. And there again, with every specialist with whom we came into contact, we learned something from them. I always did, and I think that's where I picked up the knowledge in these various fields that a general bookman carries around with him.

GARDNER: Roman Novins is next.

EPSTEIN: Roman Novins: he had a small, a very small business, but he dropped out of it after about two or three years. A very nice person. I don't know too much about him. He did, one day, bring me two framed pictures of Pickwick characters--the characters out of [The] Pickwick [Papers]--and I still have 'em. And I said, "I'll buy these from you." "No," he said, "I want you to have them; this is with my compliments." That's the kind of a guy he was. A very nice guy. But there must have been some little bit of

money behind the family, because the way they were living certainly was not from any thing he could make as a beginner in the book business. His wife may have had inherited money, or--I don't know. But he didn't last too long in it.

GARDNER: Then next we have Mel Royer, whom we talked about.

EPSTEIN: Yes, we talked about Mel.

GARDNER: And Zeitlin and Ver Brugge, which we talked about at length.

EPSTEIN: Did I mention about Mel that the Japanese came and bought all his entire stock?

GARDNER: No, I don't think so.

EPSTEIN: Yes. You know, I think maybe we ought to mention that. It's an interesting episode, and it's historical. Mel, you know, had been not too well in the last number of years. Mel must be close to eighty now, if he isn't past eighty, because when I was a beginner, I looked upon him as a mature person--me being all of twenty-four, beginning in Los Angeles. And he was a customer; and, as I mentioned before, he already was established with a firm--I think in the accounting department, or whatever. And the last number of years, he had been trying to sell his business, because it became more and more difficult for him to operate it. He had one possible sale, where he actually went to take inventory; and for one reason or another, the sale fell through. I don't believe the

people who were wanting to buy it had any idea that the inventory would run to that amount of money. And we in the trade heard about it. Even though I wasn't in the trade at the time, I still maintained my contacts, you might say. Then one day I heard that Mel sold his entire stock--lock, stock, and barrel--to a Japanese group who came over, and came in, and packed everything that was in the shop--every scrap of paper, everything. Someday I'm going to run across Mel and get the background of it, because it's a very unusual type of deal. They just packed up everything and shipped it to Japan. Now whether they were Japanese dealers, or whether it was the Japanese government, or to give to a university, or whatever, I don't know. But that's what happened to Mel's stock. It's probably somewhere in Japan, maybe the University of Osaka, or somewhere like that. Eventually it'll have to wind up in a university. It was too varied and too large for an individual, unless somebody makes an American art-book store out of it.

GARDNER: Well, it's possible, in Tokyo. Also, we talked about Phil Brown, and we talked about the Yales. I think perhaps now we could insert something about the founding of the organization, how it happened to come together, and your own participation in it.

EPSTEIN: Well, like so many organizations, difficulties come up which affect all of us, everyone in the trade.

It was founded because there was a need. The need was created by some problem that came up. And we were having problems with two things: the main problem we were having was that from time to time there would be--I wouldn't say police harassment but the police would discover that somebody had stolen a book somewhere and sold it to a dealer. Were we not bound by the same laws as secondhand-furniture dealers, or pawn shops, or things like that? Now this goes back; the same things come up from the earliest days. Most of the time we were always able to beat the police back, in the sense that, "Look, this is an isolated instance. You never have any trouble with us, and we police ourselves to a certain degree. There might be some of us who would buy books which he knew might have been stolen. But for the most part, none of us are looking for trouble." And the second thing, the other thing, is that whenever anyone discovered a book in a used-book shop which had been stolen from somebody, they were always given that book back, or they were given it back for the price that the dealer paid. This was a haphazard arrangement, but it worked, in my opinion, much better than rules and regulations by the policemen had worked. It caused less harm and less fuss. [lawnmower noise; tape stopped] So with all this trouble we were having from time to time, there was one particular period where they really started getting tough. [tape stopped] There's one spot there where they

really became tough with us, and they passed a very strict law that we must report every book we buy and have to get the signature and identification of the seller, whether it's one book or a thousand books, whether we bought it in the store or we bought it at the person's home. This was almost an impossible task. If you bought a library of several hundred books, you'd have to hire a person to catalog them.

So we got around, and we organized a group of us, and we said, "Look, we've got to have a group that'll get together, and maybe hire an attorney, and fight this thing." [tape stopped] So we did just that, and that's the way our organization was born, or revived. The people who were looked upon in those days in the trade were Jake, Louis Epstein, Dawsons, Charlie Yale. Holmes never participated in anything, although he probably was one of the largest dealers here. And [with] many of the smaller ones around the city, we got together and organized this group. That's the way it was. And we took turns being the president of it. We used to meet informally. Well, like all these drives, the thing finally quieted down. We tried to hire an attorney to fight city hall, but attorneys who fight city hall are extremely expensive. We spent about $500 in cash, which was a lot of money for our group, but he did us very little good. I think our own conduct probably helped us more than whatever the attorney did. We got

the law modified a little bit. The law is probably still on the books, but it's never been enforced. [tape stopped]

GARDNER: Well, my next question would be your own involvement. You were one of the first presidents, if not the first.

EPSTEIN: Yes, I was one of the first. I think Charlie Yale, if I'm not mistaken, was the first. There isn't much to say, you know, about being president of that. It was a small group; we did what we had to do. Most of our meetings we discussed a minimum of business and a maximum of gossip. Booksellers are a notoriously gossipy group. They can't keep a secret--in no way. Almost every year we had a dinner. And our meetings were held at our homes, as a rule. I think we had several meetings up at the other house on North Curson.

After one of the meetings--I may have mentioned, in speaking about Harry Lawyer--word got around (he later threw it up to me) that I lived in a mansion. That's the North Curson house. It's far from that.

But [it was] a very loose organization. We really didn't have too many problems to settle. I think what it eventually evolved into, when they got into the national group, the AABA--they became more exclusive. We would take anyone in the trade who wanted to join. As a matter of fact, we dug them out to have them join us. The present group, which is part of the international--they have certain

standards. You have had to be in the business x number of years.

GARDNER: Is that so?

EPSTEIN: I don't know what their standards are now, but they vote you in or out. You have to be of good character. We never questioned a guy's character. [laughter]

GARDNER: From some of the stories you've told me, that would have limited the membership quite a bit. [laughter]

EPSTEIN: If anyone had any reason to blackball you, which I think is totally illegal in the trade organization--I'm not necessarily going to express my opinion. This is quite a different organization now. I think it only has those who are specialists and real rare-book dealers. I don't think it has the total number of people, of used-book sellers, in the area in proportion to the total number of booksellers there were. We had a greater proportion of the members of the booksellers than the proportion they have now. But I think the present group intentionally wants it to be so. But the chap who has just an average secondhand-book store--I don't really think they want him in the organization. Which, I think, is a mistake, because two things happen: There's a certain amount of contact that's lost between the two, and the one who has what I term an ordinary used-book store--that is, not being a specialty shop; the chap who buys and sells almost

any kind of book--he has less chance to learn from the other people if he doesn't belong to their group. Discussion always takes place at every meeting, informally. They ask each other questions, and they hear of a book that somebody said was rare. I didn't know it was rare, and I immediately perked up my ear. And I learned that that was a rare book instead of a common book, or it was worth x number of dollars instead of two, three dollars. And that is a means of learning the book business, the constant mingling of these people in the trade.

This is an aside from your question. They have so many tools now of learning values which we never had in our day. They have more active reporting in the trade papers, where they give you resumes of auction sales. And they have something new that's come up within the last eight, ten years. It's a set of books; the compiler of it goes through all the catalogs issued by dealers. When I say all of them, I'm positive it can't possibly be all, but a great many catalogs issued by various dealers across the country. And he gathers that information, and they list it in those books. And from time to time, they bring them up to date. Now, a lot of that information is published regularly, has been, in American Book Prices Current, over the years. But the American Book Prices Current did not list as many books as individual catalogers did. The American Book Prices Current only listed those for

auction. So they have a tool of knowledge for getting the values quickly.

GARDNER: What is that? What is that book?

EPSTEIN: I don't exactly know the name of it, but I think your library probably has it.

GARDNER: Oh, I'm sure, yes.

EPSTEIN: And you might get it, or you might call one of the dealers and stop in and look at it. I've never used it; I've never looked into it. But I know that it exists. I've seen advertisements for it, and I've seen it on some dealers' shelves. So in that respect, their knowledge about values is greater. But the harmful thing is that a house that issues a catalog is usually aimed at the library market, and the library market will pay more for things that they want than the average person walking in off the street. So I found this to be true, and I will go into some used-book stores, on some days when I run across them, and do a little browsing. They all will have those books marked up at the highest possible value. And they sit there, month after month after month. And if you question them about it: "Oh, well, that's what it has to bring in the"--whatever the name of the book is--the trade prices. And I think in that respect, it lessens the turnover of stock for the merchant. The person who doesn't issue catalogs is riding on the back of those who do issue catalogs. But I think they're making a mistake. I think

they should maybe price them proportionately, but not exactly.

Anyway, my reasons for questioning the wisdom of not allowing all the booksellers in or asking them to join: I question that as being totally good for the book trade. It may be good for some of those participants who are rare-book dealers. They get together and do the same things we used to do--talk about books, and bring in a person who's knowledgeable of books who'd occasionally give us a lecture, in addition to having our business meeting. I think they should try to teach more people, rather than restrict the numbers they can teach or trade with. In my way of thinking it has a certain amount of selfishness put into it. They have control of the organization, and they do good things. They encourage business from librarians, because librarians are their chief customers now--it wasn't so in the early days. Libraries didn't have as much money, and there weren't as many of them. Especially college libraries. And the rare-book libraries--a lot of them have been established over the years by foundations. The college libraries, university libraries, and foundations are probably the chief buyers of rare books. And they're very thoroughly cultivated by the rare-book dealers--which is proper. Every other industry tries to cultivate relationships with their customers to increase business.

At any rate, the organization just kept on. It would quiet down. Then something else would come up, and we'd get excited and boom up again. It had its ups and downs. But it was a great place to have a little fun, do a little bit of drinking. At our annual dinners, a lot of the boys would like to show off their prosperity. It was a nice group. And practically every person we mentioned of the old-timers has been a president of it at one time or another.

GARDNER: It had a turnover?

EPSTEIN: Yes, we encouraged the turnover, because the amount of actual business we transacted for the organization was minimal. We paid our dues, and we had a little fun. And a problem would come up. It was usually the president's job--at least when I was president--to settle differences between dealers: transactions where one felt that he wasn't being paid, or paid on time, or had been taken advantage of by someone else. A couple of dealers, I had a great deal of correspondence with libraries about: they felt that the libraries were promised certain deliveries of books which never came through. But that's the nature of people, and they're in the book business, same as everywhere else.

GARDNER: When did your own participation end?

EPSTEIN: Frankly, I made one serious error: I dropped out of the organization when we went out of the old-book business. But my participation, before that even, wasn't

active participation. I would go to the dinners, but I rarely attended the other meetings. My lack of participation increased as my new-book business increased--and demands on my time, too. I dropped out, and I remember Glen Dawson calling me and saying, "Why did you drop out, Louis? We need you in the organization." I said I felt that I was no longer of any use because I was no longer in the old-book business. Well, he was right; I should not have dropped out. And as a matter of fact, after I retired, I asked to be reinstated--which I was, but only on one of the rare exceptions. I think I'm the only one in the whole country who is not an active dealer who was reinstated after having dropped out. There would have been no question of my continuing to be a member had I retired from the old-book business.

GARDNER: Because of your longevity.

EPSTEIN: But here I dropped out before my career was ended in the book business. And I wrote them. I said, "You can't do that to me; I'm one of the founding members." So they made the exception, and now I'm an associate member. I don't have any voting rights, but I can go to their organizational meeting. And I've attended a few meetings. But in thinking back, I realize that Glen was right. I should not have dropped out because I'd been such an active participant in it. But now everybody's happy I'm back in.

GARDNER: Even though you can't vote. One of the big

activities of the local chapter is the book fairs. Do you participate in this?

EPSTEIN: Well, the book fairs are relatively recent, you know. They didn't have those in our day.

GARDNER: Oh, I see.

EPSTEIN: Fairs of all kinds have become more common. They have these international book fairs now for rare-book dealers, and I think from that the idea evolved that we should have one in the city. They now have them in New York; they have them in London; they had one in Toronto, Canada, just early this spring, I think, or sometime this spring. So this is relatively new, I think--what, seven, eight years?

GARDNER: Oh, is that all it is?

EPSTEIN: Maybe a couple of more years. And they've been successful. They're planning one, I think, for sometime in October.

GARDNER: One of the early activities when you were there was an auction. Do you recall that auction at all?

EPSTEIN: I don't recall any auction. Oh, yes, yes. It was after my time--where each bookseller brought in something to raise a few dollars for the organization. Yes. I did not participate in that, because by that time, I was out of the picture.

GARDNER: There are just a few minutes on the tape, so to wrap it up I'll just ask you about some of the people who

are in it now who weren't before, and who we haven't discussed. Cherokee is one that I'd like to talk about because it's one of your neighbors.

EPSTEIN: Cherokee is Jack Blum, of course. Incidentally, the Cherokee is where Lee Freeson makes his headquarters. I don't know if he still has, but he had a little bit of an office there, and he kept a little bit of a stock there. But Jack Blum started in, oh, I would say in the fifties, with a little shop on Cherokee Avenue just south of Hollywood Boulevard. And he was specializing in Hollywood material--pictures of stars and anything related to the movies and movie magazines and whatnot. There's always a market for these movie collectors. I never did fully understand, and I don't to this day. I can't see that many of them being scholars and why they want these pictures, but for one reason or another, they do. Jack stuck with it and learned more and more. He finally had to give up his store on Cherokee, and he moved over to Hollywood Boulevard. He now has a very well established business. His sons are now taking over. And he has gone into the business with variety, enlarged the scope of his business. He has a lot of very fine sets. His sons started in with the comic-book business, and they developed that and a lot of other areas. He operates a little bit differently than any other bookseller I know of, where he gives each one of his people a certain specialty that they develop.

And now he has [Clark] Casey in the Americana department; and he has his sons, as I say, in the movie business and one in the other business; and he himself takes care of sets and things like that. All his buying has always been done for him by his employees. He himself has sat in the back of the picture. But it apparently worked out quite successfully; he seems to be doing well. Jack is a very nice person. I say that because I've involved him in other things where only a nice person would be involved in.

GARDNER: Such as?

EPSTEIN: Like the United Jewish Welfare Fund. Even in the days when things weren't very good with him, he always managed to make a contribution. I could mention some names of other Jewish booksellers, and I hope that the record doesn't indicate that I'm overinvolved with Jewish affairs because I think Jewish affairs need some intense involvement since the Hitler days, and they're still going on in the state of Israel today. And I always felt that it was my duty as a Jew--I always felt that it was the same duty of the other people who were Jews--and I tried to involve the Jewish booksellers in addition to many other people, and I'm happy to say I was very successful.

TAPE NUMBER: XI, SIDE TWO

JULY 29, 1974

GARDNER: You want to finish the sentence?

EPSTEIN: As I say, I was happy to say I was successful in involving some--and totally unsuccessful in involving some other--Jewish booksellers (whom I will not name). I'm particularly proud of the fact--and I think this should not be taken amiss by anybody if they happen to hear what I'm saying--that I was able to originally get contributions, say, from a chap like Jake Zeitlin, when he was not as affluent as he is today. Now his contributions run into sizable sums. Also Jack Blum, when he was having a very difficult time, he gave me at least something, to at least express his involvement, his duties, his duty as a person of a particular group that needed help. My feeling about it has always been, "Look, I am part of that group. I don't care where I live, and I don't care what I do. If I were in the circumstances they were in and it was only because they were of that group that they were attacked, I might have been attacked--and undoubtedly would have been attacked. And I might have suffered the fate that the others have suffered, so it's a part of my duty to help those to escape who could escape, and to help them get a foothold somewhere where they can earn their own existence and become persons again." But

some people don't want to be involved in anything--which applies to local charities and local civic affairs, too. One does not exclude the other. It happens to be the lot of the Jewish group in our community to be involved in both. You do not--by no means--neglect the local affairs, local charities. I contribute to them, too, and I think everyone who contributes to the welfare organizations I'm talking about is the same type of person who will contribute to all charities, all kinds of organizations that need help in doing a worthwhile task. It's my philosophy. I don't know whether it's because of it; maybe that would help create me, help create my outlook on life that attracted the people to my place of business. I don't know. I have theories about it--they're surmises; I would call them theories. And, you know, "bread upon the waters" sort of thing, but not exactly in that phrase. We gave away a lot of money, and we're still giving away a lot of money, but there seems to be money coming back to us. And we had to struggle to get it; and if we didn't have it, obviously, we wouldn't have given so much away. But I'm very thankful I was able to involve people, to convince them, to show them that this is the right thing for them to do.

Take a man like Milton Luboviski. He's of Jewish background--raised perhaps. It might have even been an Orthodox Jewish family; I don't know that much about his family

background. But from the first time, Milton--his original contribution was sort of an offhand thing: "Okay, Louis. You asked me for it; I'll give it to you." I said, "Milton, don't give me a nickel. I don't need it. But I want you to feel that you're giving something to help somebody who cannot help himself simply because he is part of our group--your group and my group." If it was a Catholic group who was being persecuted, or as the Armenians were by the Turks. Well, the Armenians lost a million and a half people. For no reason. And over the years, he got the idea better, and his contribution now is not a great deal of money, but it's meaningful. And what's more important to me is it's a contribution with something behind it, not just something for Louis Epstein because I asked for it. And by the same token, some of the contributions I originally got simply because I asked for it. I'm sure that if somebody else had come in. . . . They knew me; they had a certain respect for me, which enabled me to talk to them. I had a personal basis on which to talk to them that perhaps nobody else could talk to them on. Like Milton, for instance--I'm almost positive that had somebody else gone to see Milton that first time, I don't think they would have gotten it.

This is totally aside from the book business, but it's an aside to show that book dealers should be--and are, some of them--in activities which are beyond the book

business itself. And I'm sure if you talk to Jake or some of the others, they will find areas in which they participate. Jake does a lot of things for libraries. Well, I do a few things for libraries, too. Politically, Jake is involved. Well, I am involved politically, too. The reason I mention Jake so often is because I think Jake is a very broad-minded person and a very significant person, with whom I've been associated so many years, and whom I respect so much. I use him as an example, too, of how a man has climbed way above his adversities at the beginning, both his family adversities and his financial adversities. And I think in that respect, I have a certain judgment of Jake which is perhaps beyond that of others in the trade whom I might mention--which I certainly won't. He's a bigger man. I don't know how to put it. His reputation should be much greater beyond that of his reputation in the book trade alone. And I think it is. I think he has been involved. I think Glen Dawson is deserving of a great deal of credit, because beyond his participation in everything pertaining to the book business, he's also involved with many things: involved in church, involved with libraries, involved in many things pertaining to the reading and spreading of knowledge. A good churchman. And he raises a nice family, participates, and he does other things which are not particularly related to books which are worthwhile. I think somewhere along the

line, of course, [the fact of] this being a story of books should not preclude people being cited for things other than their particular business.

GARDNER: Well, the other one that's on the new list that wasn't on the old is Heritage Book Shop.

EPSTEIN: Heritage, I know very little of their background. They opened in the same block as the Pickwick, and I went in to see them--a couple of very bright youngsters, the Weinstein brothers [Louis and Ben]. And apparently they've learned their business very well, and they're, from what I hear, extremely successful. I don't know how they started, where their finances came from, but to me it appears that they must have brought a great deal of finances into the book business when they came in because of the rapidity of their growth in certain areas which involved a lot of money. In my mind that is beyond the capability of what they might have earned in the relatively short time they were in business. Now, I'm not saying that in any critical sense whatever. That's my opinion. Someone else may know more about them than I.

GARDNER: How long have they been at it?

EPSTEIN: Well, let's see, two, four, six . . . they've been on the Boulevard close to about eight years now, I think. Maybe a trifle longer. Time just telescopes with me. But I really do know very little about them. There's another brother who has a bookstore in Hollywood. Book City,

I think, is owned by Jerry Weinstein, who's a brother. And I understand there's a brother in Long Beach who has a bookstore, used books. The brother from Long Beach now runs The Book Treasury of 6707 Hollywood Boulevard--the former location of Heritage. So they're very much integrated in the book business. [tape stopped]

You ask me about Theodore Front. He is in the [business of] books about music. He used to come to the Pickwick to buy books on music or whatever other things he might need, and he was more or less of a collector. And then he decided he would like to go into the thing full time. As a collector, he probably sold things now and again. And he came to me and said what did I think of him going into the music-book business? I knew him as a man who knew music books. And I said, "I think it's a very good field." He said, well, he'd been doing a little business in his home, in the off-hours and all that, but he wanted to quit whatever he was doing and go in full time. And I said, "If you've got the idea, you'll eventually worry yourself all about it for a long time. And I think you can make a go of it. There are a few people in the country who are doing it, and the market for music in Southern California is tremendous. You know your books and you know your business. Go ahead." Sure enough. "Well," he said, "by golly, I think now that you've said these things to me, you've pointed out the areas in which I could serve."

I mean, it was a general discussion, a little bit of general ideas how to go about it. He knew a lot about it already--where to buy music, where to sell music he bought, and he knew all the music people so the doors would be open to him. I said, "I'm sure you could make it." And I understand he's doing quite nicely.

I see they have a member here on the list by the name of Marian L. Gore. "Cookery, wine, hotels, inns, coffee, tea, gardening, herbs, mushrooms." Marian Gore, Mrs. Gore, was an old customer of ours. Her husband had a graphics business in Hollywood on Santa Monica Boulevard. And the family were customers of ours. One day we heard that there was a divorce coming up. They were separated. And it eventually happened. And Mrs. Gore kept coming in, and he kept coming in, too. We got two accounts instead of one. But then she told me she wanted to start into the book business. She wanted to open a new-book store. And I talked her out of it. For two reasons: she told me the amount of money she would have available, and I didn't think that was enough to start a store, and it would be risking all that she had, which was a risk that was too great for her to take. And she had no particular background in running a business, either--let alone running a bookstore business. And I explained it to her. I told her how much she would have to have for initial stock and

how much rent she would have to pay. We sat down, and we went over the skeletal figures. And she decided it was not for her. Well, it was my surprise that a few years later, I found out that she went into this old-book business. She moved to San Gabriel and went into this business little by little, and apparently picked up these books and sold them to people she knew who were interested in the subject, and gradually built up--I don't think it's a big business but it's enough of a business, apparently, to help earn her living. It may support her entirely; I don't know. I bumped into her at a Friends of the UCLA Library dinner. And that was the first I had heard of it. And she said she'd issued catalogs. I said, "Well, why didn't you send me some?" She said she'd send them to me. A very interesting catalog. So now, occasionally, I pick up something in her field and I'll write to her about it. But there again, it proves the theory that if a person has a specialized knowledge or special interest, he can gradually build a book business into it. Mrs. Gore again proves that case.

Doris Harris Autographs: she was president of the group for a while. I don't know her too well, but she seems to be a very capable person.

And [G.F.] Hollingsworth, who is a Western Americana dealer in Manhattan Beach, is an excellent bookman. We used to sell him a lot when we had old books. He used to

buy a lot of remainders from us and keep them a year or two until the remainder supply would be exhausted, and then he would put them in his catalog at close to the original price--which is a common practice. I'm not taking away from his reputation. It's a common practice, and I think it's a worthwhile practice because he saves a certain number of books for collectors who'll come later and want the book. And many remainders in later years become quite scarce. A remainder sometimes is an excellent book of which there weren't enough buyers for the original edition. It has nothing to do with the quality of the book. And very often when the supply is gone, they become extremely scarce. I myself have paid three times the price of what I could have bought it as a remainder at.

The International Bookfinders is Dick Mohr--Richard Mohr. There again is an example of a person who is in one kind of a business and built up a sideline which eventually proved greater than his original business. He was in the advertising business in some area. And he went into a search service operation, but he advertised his services in certain areas which brought him a lot of excellent accounts. And now he's really a very knowledgeable bookman and apparently does a very fine business. His wife is involved; his son was involved until he went off to college. And I think that's his principal business now. I think he's doing extremely well.

There are a number of people on the list now, on the list of members here, who I know very little about, or absolutely nothing. I don't know Carolyn Kaplan; I may have met her. I don't know Caler publications; I don't know [Laurence] McGilvery. We talked about Kurt Schwarz, and I think we've covered all the old-book men about whom I can have any knowledge, about whom I have any knowledge.

GARDNER: The next section, then, that we'll cover will be the different bookmen, the book salesmen who've come in and out of Pickwick.

EPSTEIN: Well, they now like to be called book publisher's representatives.

GARDNER: Publisher's representatives, okay.

EPSTEIN: They feel they're one cut above the drummer. The new-book business, of course, has no relation to the old-book business. But in the new-book business, a publisher's representative or salesman--whatever you wish to call him--is a very important person. At least, they were to me. They bring you news of the new books of their own particular field, their own particular house; and then they bring you what's happening in the industry, which way the trends of books are going, which publishers are having good seasons or bad. They talk about more--not more about other people's lines than their own, but they constantly have to bring you news to compare what they're selling with what the house is selling--why their book of fiction is a better book of

fiction than, say, Doubleday's. And then, especially the major houses like Random House; Doubleday; Little, Brown; Houghton Mifflin; Macmillan; Morrow; and McKay, now--they had varying degrees of successes from season to season. Each year they're competitive for the bookseller's dollar. And they have to tell you why we have to buy their books rather than their competitor's books; so, in a degree, they have to know what their competitor is doing. And they provide us with a great deal of knowledge, and we have to learn how to accept that knowledge--which salesman's judgment to respect, and which house's judgment to respect. Viking is a house that requires a lot of attention. [So is] Knopf.

So we had to learn to listen to the salesmen, to read the salesmen, you might say. We'd have to know which one puffs more than the other, which one is likely to exaggerate, which one is carried away by what his sales manager told him or what his editors told him. And over the years you get to know them. You get to know which are the men whose information is totally reliable. And that depends, of course, a great deal on the house he's working for. Is the house totally reliable in giving honest information? Rather than some houses, who we know are always puffing 1,000 percent. There are houses that do that. They don't know how to judge their own product. Everything they produce is going to be the best seller, and they expect us to buy accordingly--which, of course, we can't and we don't. So

in this respect, the salesman is a great teacher. To me, they were tremendous teachers, because I had never bought new books. I had never worked in old books until I started the store. Then I had to start over again to learn another new business, really. The two businesses are very much unlike, although I would tell everyone starting in--if they asked me, that is--that if they spent two or three years in the old-book business and then went into the new-book business, they would have a much broader scope of the new-book business, because in the old-book business we handled a broader scope of knowledge. We're not confined to those things that come out today, with a minimum of classic material that every new-book store handles.

At any rate, to me at least, the book publisher's representatives were extremely important because of my ignorance to begin with and the scope of knowledge that they brought to me. And there were some outstanding men who were in the field when I started who had almost national reputations as knowledgeable and excellent salesmen. There were two or three of them who were extremely beneficial for me to know and for me to have been called on by them.

One of them, particularly, was one of the men whom I knew before I went into the old-book business, James D. Blake. He represented Harper's. The first time I ever saw his books, I had to go to the hotel. In the old

days (this was in the 1920s and before), the book salesman would bring a trunkful of books, take them to the hotel, and invite his clients to come up to a series of appointments. And then they would show them the books and tell them what there is. Of course, that is not being done now. And I remember one time, even before I bought new books particularly to any extent, I was invited to his suite. And I, first time, saw a publisher's layout. I knew him before we opened in Hollywood, but when we opened in Hollywood and began to buy a few new books, he would call on us, sell us a few. Then when we announced that we had to go into the new-book field, and were going to really put in a stock of new books, then he said, "Louis, I have to spend a whole day with you going over the Harper line." In those days Harper had a very big line, probably larger than they have today--of classics and basic books on many, many subjects. I think their list is much more narrow today than it was then. I said, "Jim, I don't need a whole day of your time." I said, "I'm not going to buy that many books." He said, "I know you're not going to buy that many books. But if you're going to start buying new books, you have to be knowledgeable of what is available, and Harper is one of the broadest lists in the business." And then he named two or three other publishers; he said that "you must become acquainted with their whole list." I said, "Okay." I mean, he was a good deal older

than I was, and I respected him. And he said, "Well, I'll come in, and we'll break for lunch, and then. . . ." And sure enough, he came in, and he went over every book on the Harper list, whether it was relevant to my business or not. He said, "I'm going to tell you about every one of these books in the list." And he went down every book in the Harper list, and the catalog was about an inch and a quarter thick. Well, he had my mind reeling in many areas. But there were certain books about which he said, "Louis, now this book you've got to have." He didn't try to sell me everything--by no means. But he said, "I want you to know they're available in case somebody asks you for them." He said, "Let it sink in a little bit." And it was a great thing. And all that little bit of sinking in, somewhere in your consciousness you became aware of it. I think a bookman's mind is either trained for that or inherited for that. And if he's got that, he's really got something. And at that time, my mind was much more accurate than it is now.

But we went over every book. And there were certain books he'd tell me, "You've got to have this. You'll sell this." And occasionally we would come across a book, and he said, "Louis, this book you'll never sell, but you've got to carry it in your store." "Why? Jim, why would I need a book that I won't sell?" He said, "It'll make your store stand out. People will be impressed with it." And he

said, "You'll sell one occasionally. You'll sell enough in a year. You may sell only one in a year, but then you may be discouraged about handling it." And for those days, it would be a rather high-priced book. And by golly, he was absolutely right. He had an uncanny knowledge; he had specialized knowledge of every book in the store. There was a book on music of some kind; I forget the title of it. [There were] two or three of them that he picked out--a book of English grammar. There are thousands of English grammars for less money than he had, but his grammar was a particularly good one. It was much more expensive than the others, but it was a book. . . . And he taught me that a bookstore must be broad in scope. I say, "He taught me." He encouraged me to follow the principle. In the old-book business, in the general old-book store, you learn that the broader the scope, the better the business, you see. And he pressed me, impressed on me, that it applies also to the new-book business. And I think those little things helped me. He went on and sold me for years, and he would guide me through a catalog. Occasionally he would say, "Now, Louis, this is a good book, but I'm not sure you can sell it." Well, we compromised. The minute he told me it was a good book, from what he had told me previously in that first lecture day--let's call it that--that if he said this was a good book, somebody's going to want it. And I adopted a

principle, consciously or unconsciously in those days, [that] if there was a chance of selling a copy of a book, of a good book, I would buy it, figuring that somebody in Hollywood, somebody in our community would hear of it and would want it. Maybe it would be a feather in our cap if we had it. And maybe our competition didn't have it. And it turned out thousands of times, literally thousands of times where we were the only ones in Southern California who ordered that particular book. And we would get a call from someone, and they'd say, "Well, I'm looking for this book. Nobody has it." "Well," I'd say, "we have it, and next time you start asking us first." "Oh, you've taught me." We tied in a customer that way.

But to go back to the men themselves, there were a number of salesmen who were that knowledgeable of what they were selling. I must criticize the modern, the younger book representatives--and in that respect, I think, the house they represent should be criticized, perhaps, rather than they--because there is no longer that emphasis on the backlist. By backlist, I hope you know what I'm talking about. For anyone listening--if anyone listens--[laughter] the backlist means those books that were published anywhere from last year to a hundred years ago, and the publisher's still carrying that book, maybe in revised editions.

The younger men never try to sell you backlists. They don't know their backlists; they're not the least bit interested in even taking an order for backlist stock. Once a year, maybe, their house will give them a list of some of their back stock and ask them to take orders for it on a special deal.

Jim Blake is one of the men--of course, he's gone a great many years now--of whom I have a great and fond memory as a person and as a teacher. I can mention a few others. Louis Freedman, who at that time represented Macmillan. There's another big house. Macmillan had an entirely different policy. But they, too, had a tremendous backlist. Louis knew his backlist. We didn't go over the backlist as extensively with Louis Freedman as I did with Jim Blake. But every time he came in, we took a portion of it. Macmillan, at that time, when Louis was there, had the good fortune, or the planning, or the books, or the titles, or the ability to create a best seller every season. (By season I mean the fall and Christmas season.) Every season [they were] bringing out a best seller, promoting it in such a way. The book was usually of very high quality, and they would either have <u>the</u> best seller or very close to the top of it. Now, Louis would come in with the book that they had for that fall (fiction as a rule; they had one major fiction, one nonfiction), a

fiction book, would come in and say, addressing me, "I want you to buy a hundred copies of the book." I'd say, "Are you out of your mind? A hundred copies of the book for me? With the volume of business I do?" "You will sell every one of them." "Well," I said, "Louis, I've heard that story from a lot of salesmen." "Well," he said, "I'm telling you." He said, "If you don't sell them, I'll take them back." Well, in those days the return policies were not as liberal as they are today. Now practically everything is returned. In those days, they didn't allow you to return very many. Maybe some publishers had a policy, a certain proportion of value of what you bought for the season or the year. And they used to allow maybe 5 percent, which was nothing if you got stuck with a big buy. He said, "If you don't sell them, I will take them back." Well, 75 percent of the time, he was right. We sold them. We didn't sell a whole fifty or a hundred, but whatever he sold us, the carryover past the Christmas season--if it was a good book it would carry on till the spring--would usually take care of that. He was accused of being a hard-sell man, and in some ways he was. But if you learned to read him, and fought back in certain areas, you got along with him. But he was very knowledgeable, and he could dissect a book and tell you why it will sell. And he had ideas of selling. He is still active, but he doesn't make many calls himself. He has three or four

people working under him, but he's going to retire, I think, at the end of this year or next year. He represented the Cambridge University Press after he left Macmillan. He left Macmillan and went to work for other--Macmillan came in with a new group of executives; it separated from the British company. Macmillan of America is not related to the Macmillan of England anymore. So he went and he represented other publishers--which were totally unlike Macmillan, but he did a good job with them. We're very good personal friends. Whenever we get together, we have dinner together; we visit back and forth.

There were several whom I will mention. Harrison Leusler--his nickname was "the sheriff of Petaluma." I heard the story once, but I've forgotten how he started being called the sheriff. I think he adopted western clothes, so his eastern counterparts named him. He, again, was a totally different kind of salesman than the others, but still extremely knowledgeable of every book on the Houghton Mifflin list. But he had one fault: he got carried away by his own enthusiasm for every Houghton Mifflin book that they ever put out. It was the best book; it's going to be the best seller; it's going to be the biggest book. And until you learned how to fight back, how to resist his pressures, you would have a little bit of trouble. Once I learned to read him, we got along beautifully. Oh,

we would have almost fistfights, but we were good friends. He would come in, and he would sit there and give you the story of every book. He was one of the few that read every book on his list for that season. And he would give you the whole story of it. You had to be patient, just sit there and listen patiently, but he had an honor about him. If you wavered on the line, and he wanted to sell you twenty-five or fifty or a hundred, then you could maybe make a bargain with him--and will he pay the freight back if they don't sell? Which he very often did. But he was a very honorable person, and he did a good job. But until you learned how to take him, he would be inclined to be domineering. But once you sat down and cooled him down, you got to know him. In every other way he was the finest gentleman. His word was 100 percent. If he told you that he would take them back, he would take them no questions asked. Or if you pointed out to him that he misled you about something, he would make it right. And occasionally, he would unwittingly say something which might have misled you. Of the three I spoke of, Harrison is gone, and Jim Blake is gone.

Carl Smalley was a Kansan converted into a bookman who was a very unusual character. He had a voice like a foghorn. And when he laughed you could hear him a mile away [makes noise like foghorn]. He was a very fine man. He had a great appreciation for books, and he knew books. But he represented

a lot of very small publishers. He had one major publisher: he had Dutton for a while. Oh, he would come in with about fifteen small publishers, university presses, who had five books, six books, or eight books, or whatever. And he had lines that nobody else would take. But usually they would publish good books. And over the years he built up a business which was remarkable in the sense that he carried these lines which nobody else wanted to take and built them up. They became better publishers and became more knowledgeable publishers--especially the university presses. Some of them became quite professional at it. One of them, the University of Oklahoma, which he had, was one of the most efficient presses of any publisher--university press or other--in the whole country. I've always admired their way of doing business. They publish a lot of western books. And we used to sell a lot of them. We were their best account on the West Coast. And it was because of the way Carl presented the line to me. I had a certain interest, and I felt that our people would buy a certain number of them. [tape stopped]

Now, to continue about the publisher's representatives or publisher's salesmen. Ray Healy was one of the earliest salesmen to call on me. As a matter of fact, he was amongst the first group, that first year we decided to see salesmen. A very fine Irishman, very religious. He taught me a great deal about the book business. At that time, he had the

Modern Library, and he had Random House, and I think he had Simon and Schuster, too. He had a lot of very good lines for those days. And we did a tremendous amount of business together, became very good friends--and had our usual fights, just proving my theory that if you fight with a man long enough, you will become very good friends. It's true. If you remain adversaries long enough, you get to know each other so well that you're eating together. You may fight together, but you eat together. But he, too, had an influence on my education as a new-book store man--which, of course, is a totally different way of buying books than old books.

There's one incident that I'd like to relate--I may have related it to you before--when I first had the United Jewish Welfare Fund, Hollywood Division, and our quota was a half a million dollars to raise. This is the Ray Healy I told you about--a very human person. And we still correspond. He now lives in New Hampshire and comes back here once in a while. When he does, we see each other.

Another chap who had some influence in teaching me was Jess Carmack. Now, each one of those people I mentioned sold me in the very first season when we decided to have new books. And they all did something for me, to help guide me--very honestly, too. And one of the reasons I love to mention it is because there was a certain amount of trust established between the representative of a line and the

buyer of a line, and that applies to many other trades, too. A good representative for a company, selling for a company, is a tremendous asset, both for the company and the customer. If they are honest with each other, they will maintain a relationship which promotes good business for both of them. Jess Carmack--he lives now on San Vicente in Santa Monica. We had dinner with them just two Saturdays before last. He also was one of the early ones. He represented Dodd, Mead; and later on he represented Morrow and one or two other publishers. At that time there weren't so many publishers' men representing one house, exclusively. They were commission men, and they represented two or three and sometimes four houses. But his principal line at that time, I think, was Dodd, Mead. Dodd, Mead didn't have anywhere near the catalog that Harper had, but we went through the catalog again, and we picked up the high spots. And he had a dictionary of music he was selling at that time--[Virgil] Thomson [Encyclopedia of Music]; I think they still publish it. And he brought it out. At that time it was selling for eight dollars and a half, which was a heck of a lot of money for a book in those days. Well, I said, "Oh, Jess, who's going to pay me eight dollars and a half?" "Well," he said, "Louis, you're not going to sell very many of them, but every time you sell one, it's going to make a beautiful tinkle in the cash register." I never forgot that line. [laughter] And we

bought it, and we sold it. On my own, I never would have chosen that book. But he convinced me that it sells, it's staple stock. You won't sell too many, but if you sell one of those, that was the equivalent of selling four novels at two dollars apiece in those days--which is the total amount of business. It's helped me in the sense that it helped me create a good stock of merchandise where people can find staples as well as best sellers. I think that was one of our major strengths, right from the beginning.

There's a chap named Ellis Baker. He's now retired, and he lives up in the Bay Area, Fremont. And I correspond with him occasionally; occasionally I'll call him on the telephone. He, too, is one of the old-timers. He used to be a very heavy drinker. And when he was in his cups, he had an ugly mouth. But he later gave up drinking and almost became a reformer; then he wouldn't associate with anyone that drank. He always used to travel with a chap name of Charlie Johnson, who also called on me. And they were great friends. But when he stopped drinking, he fell out with Charlie Johnson because he wanted Charlie to stop drinking. Charlie rarely drank to excess, but occasionally he would drink to excess, but not the way Ellis would. And he didn't react the same way that Ellis did. But Ellis was a good book salesman, in spite of his faults. He represented several good lines--Lippincott was one, and Winston, at that time. We established a very nice rapport, and we got along very well.

Drinking was an occupational hazard. These chaps would go out on the road, away from their families, and when their work was done at the end of the day, they would either invite the buyers from the stores that they visited to come have dinner and a drink with them, and the inclination would be to just sit there and drink.

EPSTEIN: I mentioned Charlie Johnson. He was a very hard-sell salesman. And although I liked him as a person, I always dreaded sitting down to see his line because he bore down so hard and he was so difficult to fight off. And he represented a good many lines, too, so it would be almost an all-day fight by the time we were through with him. But he was a very fine person. After he got through, he would do anything for you, anything. But when he was selling, it was just hammer, hammer, hammer, just like I was the anvil and he was the hammer.

But he had an unfortunate ending. His wife had a stroke, and for years she just lay there, almost as a vegetable. And he, poor man, would come from a trip and be faced with that. Eventually she died, and he married again. But he was very sadly taken in his marriage. He married a woman who wanted to be on the go all the time. After a day's work, they'd go to nightclubs, and dancing. And he was up in years--he was an old man--and he just couldn't keep up the pace with her. Finally it ended in a divorce. But I think his mind went before his body. The last time he called on me, he was in such pitiful shape that it was embarrassing to me, and we felt so sorry for him. He tried to perform like he always did, but it just

wasn't there. It was just like watching a man in a prize fight on TV sometimes. You know the man is through, had no business going into that ring with a younger opponent or whatever; he's taking a beating from the word go. And that's the way it was watching him trying to sell. But he died. I'm not sure that he was totally there when he died. And I think of him, really, with a great deal of sorrow because personally he was a great guy, a great host, but his selling manner I didn't like. But he did a good job in calling attention to the things he had. And he was very successful. In addition to books, he had a line of toys. He made a very great deal of money, but it all scattered away with his bills, and second wife or whatever. But it was very sad; it was very sad to see him on his last trip.

There was a very interesting chap by the name of Denny Chase who used to be with Harcourt Brace, one of the very early ones. Denny was a very finely educated man, probably the most literary of all the people who called on me in those days--although Jess Carmack had a degree in English literature from Harvard. He knew his books. But Denny--I don't know what college or university he went to, but he was quite literary. He represented Harcourt Brace and one other line. And he called on me for, oh, about ten, twelve years. Then he retired. He inherited some money, and his wife inherited some money, and they bought an island up in the straits of Juan de Fuca near Seattle. And very

interesting. We visited him one time on the island. It was really the kind of a life that I wouldn't care for, but, oh, they just loved it. They were the only ones on the island. It was about half a mile from shore, and they had a nice house which he was constantly improving. And they had a limited amount of water. But later I heard that they got another good well. So, of course, that made the island much more habitable. But they enjoyed it immensely. I heard recently that he moved back to the mainland--I guess because of medical reasons. He was getting up in years, I guess.

Those are most of the old-timers. We had a number of them who came on later--excellent bookmen, a good many of them--like Ben Burke, who represented World Book Company. Jim Wallace came a little later than the others; he represented Lippincott and Harcourt Brace. He took over after Denny Chase left. A very fine man, he's just recently retired--lives in the Valley. Jim is just a beautiful person.

Stuie Woodruff, who's now Raymar, was a salesman for Doubleday, represented Doubleday at our store for quite a while. He did an excellent job. He used to give us fantastic service at Christmastime. He would, on his way down down to Raymar--well, it wasn't Raymar then, it was Vroman's--he would stop by at our place and see what Doubleday books we needed. (Vroman's operated a separate wholesale business

then.) He'd do that three, four times a week during the Christmas rush the last three, four weeks of the season. And he would get our order in the morning, deliver it back to us in his own car on the way back home in the evening. He lived in the Valley. He did that. It was a tremendous service, and it would be amazing how many dollars of extra business you can pick up if you can get that kind of service. At that time, no matter how smart you are in your buying, you never knew how much or which ones the public is going to want during the Christmas season. It's a very frustrating time for most booksellers.

GARDNER: Can we talk about Raymar for a minute now?

EPSTEIN: I think we talked about Raymar.

GARDNER: Oh, did we talk about that?

EPSTEIN: Yeah. I'm quite sure we talked about Raymar.

GARDNER: In detail, really?

EPSTEIN: He and Fran Howell both had worked for Vroman. When Stuie left Doubleday, he went to work for Vroman. Well, he did other things, too. He and Fran were sales managers for a record house--I think Warner Brothers--for a couple of years. [tape stopped] [They wanted to be in the] wholesale-book business, and they got some backing from somewhere, and they opened Raymar--made a marvelous success. They now have three places: one up in Bellingham, Washington, and one in some town near Chicago for that area.*

* The Chicago area one recently was closed.--[L.E.]

And they're doing very well. They work on a very close margin of profitability, but they're quite efficient. They've developed a lot of new ideas, and they're a great boon to any territory which they're in because they carry quite a good stock. The booksellers depend on them--especially smaller booksellers--for a great deal of their supply. They're both very fine people. Raymar is an acronym of the names of the wives, Raymone and Margaret: Raymar. They twisted them around. Incidentally, they just bought out the Ward Ritchie Press. And I haven't talked to them. I don't know what their plans are for it, but I imagine they plan to run it as a publishing arm.* With their three major outlets, they could give them distribution. But I don't know. You can combine publishing with wholesaling, and you begin to diffuse your energies and your thinking, your executive powers. But so far they've done an excellent job.

We're coming now to what I might call almost the second generation of salesmen, apart from those fellows who were the first to call on me. Amongst those, perhaps as prominent as any, would be Errett Stuart. When I first met him, I was still on Eighth Street. He had been in the service. He came from St. Louis, and somehow or other, when I first met him, he was working at the May Company book department.

---

* They are definitely running a publishing business.--[L.E.]

Occasionally he'd get a review copy of a book and come rushing down to sell it to me. And we had a gag running between us that if it hadn't been for Louis Epstein being on Eighth Street, and [his] rushing in and getting fifty cents for the brand new book, he might not have survived. And I said, "Yeah, but where in hell did I get fifty cents?" [laughter] But he's an excellent salesman. He's still selling. He had Viking up until a couple of years ago. He lost that; they hired their own salesman--which was a mistake. But he got other lines. Now he has his two sons [Jeff and Terry] working for him, and they've got a nice organization of commission salesmen. They have several good lines. He's a very nice man--nice family--and one of the people that we're very friendly with and who really did an excellent job.

Ron Smith handles Abrams and several other lines. He came out of the retail-book business. He worked for the Sather Gate, up north, for a number of years. He left them and started selling as a commission salesman. He sold for Doubleday for a while, I think, and he sold me for years and years and years. Why he doesn't retire, I don't know. Well, I talked to him; we discussed that. I saw him one day about two years ago crawling around on the floor, checking paperbacks for some one of his lines. And I said, "Ron, aren't you a little bit aged for doing that kind of work?" "Well," he said, "as long as it has to be done, I've got to do it." It's a good answer, but it wasn't particularly healthy for him. But he says he feels fine

and all that, but he's a little bit nervous. I hope nothing happens to him till he does retire. He is a good bookman--knows his books.

Bob Cohen is one of the later ones, representing Random House. He came out here when Random House decided to have their own man instead of a commission man. And it was a little difficult at first. Very New Yorkish--very house conscious, in the sense that he wanted all the advantages for the house. I thought when he first came around that he was asking too much for his house and not giving too much to the customer--in various things. We had our difficulties at first, one time a very serious one. However, we straightened that out, and we've become very good friends. And he changed his methods of selling. As a matter of fact, I gave him a good long lecture on that. I said, "Look, you may think you're doing a great deal for your house, but you're not. You're making demands on your customers which are unreasonable, and you're not satisfying the reasonable demands of your customer." I said, "In my opinion, all the good salesmen I ever knew would fight my battles for me with their house. You do just the reverse." And I told him I didn't think that was good salesmanship; I didn't think eventually it would be good for the house. Of course, he resented my telling him that. But later we settled our differences, and he changed his methods. And we became very good friends. He's a very

good friend of the family, Aaron's and Eugene's. As a matter of fact we took them to dinner at Scandia on their anniversary. They thought I was great. I thought he just wasn't using good judgment, and I told him so. I pointed out to him that every salesman on my list--I went over all the old-timers--I said, "I can ask any one of them to do certain things, and they will do them for me. You always look on it as me demanding something from your house. I am demanding something from your house. But I think I have a right to demand certain things from your house. I am a very demanding man," I told him. "I have to be. But it's your job to transmit my demands." The controversy came up about advertising. All the other publishers were giving us certain allowances for cooperative advertising. And he refused to do it. I said, "Okay, then I'll buy just a minimal amount of that kind of merchandise." I said, "Why should I take any less from you than I get from so-and-so." "Well," he said, "We've got a better house. It's our house's policy," and so forth. I said, "It was the house policy of every one of these other publishers until we convinced them that it would be to their advantage to do these things. And you don't want to even transmit these demands." I said, "Do you want me to call New York?" I said, "I don't do that." I said, "I don't call New York. But if you will give me permission, I will."

"No," he said, "You don't have to call New York." And little by little he broke down. But it was a battle. He's a firm-minded guy, but he's a nice guy. But he thought he was doing the very right thing. I told him that he wasn't. But all's well that ends well.

But this is a way we had to teach the salesmen certain things, and they taught us certain things. We created a certain type of business at Pickwick. We created a certain type of promotions--which were to the advantage of the Pickwick but they were also to the advantage of the publishers. And it was a very rough go to try to convince them to give us, say, $200, $500, for an ad. That will benefit us, but it will also benefit them. And a few of them were willing to go along with us and give us a trial. And it was, on the whole, very successful. And now they're all doing it--not only doing it for Pickwick, but they're doing it for others. So we created something that benefited the whole industry. But we had to fight like hell for it.

It was my contention--if you'll allow me to diverge--that if Pickwick advertised a book, every bookstore in the area would get the same benefit of that ad as the Pickwick did. So although the Pickwick was given an allowance to run that ad, on a certain number of dollars, the publisher wasn't giving it to the Pickwick alone, really. Because

Bob Campbell's customers weren't about to call me for that book. They're smart enough to know that Bob would have it. Vroman's customers are not going to call from Pasadena for it. And the people living in Long Beach who read the Times weren't going to call me from Long Beach. Or May Company's customers. And we went right down the line. And those who were a little bit open-minded--well, it's something they'd never done before. And it never was explained to them that way before. So finally, one or two of them tried it, and they found out that that's exactly what happened. Every store in town got benefit of that ad. It was proven to them by the phone orders that started coming into Vroman. The minute they saw that ad Monday morning, the wholesale house would start getting calls for that book because the bookstores started getting calls for that book. And it was proven--I think the most dramatically--with Ron Smith, Arco. I think I mentioned that before.

GARDNER: Yes, you told the story.

EPSTEIN: That was so dramatic that we used that as an example to the publishers time and time again. Now it's just a matter of course. They call up--would we please run an ad for them? It's a complete turnaround. And that was where one of the major differences with Bob Cohen was when we first came out here. Aaron had a great deal to do with that program--with, of course, the backing of ourselves.

A very fine salesman who called on me for many years is Jim Pike, a very reserved guy, from, I think, Philadelphia, who had McKay and Putnam. He's since given up Putnam. A very reserved guy, a very fine person who had a semisoft sell. But he tried to do the best thing he could for his customers, and if anything came up between us and the house, why, he tried his best to get it settled. We always worked with the salesmen first, rather than writing to the house. It's only when the house didn't back their salesman that we went directly, usually on attack for not backing their salesmen. Or they knew what they were talking about, that this is a problem we should be able to settle with the salesmen and not have to write you about. If he represents your line, he should be given some authority. It's one of the problems with a lot of the salesmen that call on the stores today. They're sent out; they're green, have no authority to act responsibly on anything. "Well, I'll have to call the house." And this takes time; they forget. The house gives them an offhand answer and causes a great deal of anguish--and delays for the booksellers. But Jim was one of the very nice people.

There was Jim Nourse and Floyd Nourse. One of the earliest people that I should have mentioned before is Jim Nourse's father, Jim and Floyd's father, Jim, Sr. He used to sell me, About the time I started buying, he sold me for one or two seasons, and then Errett Stuart went to

work for him. Then Errett started selling me. They represented Knopf, and Viking, and Harlem Book Company, a remainder house. Is that four lines? I forget what the other was. Later they broke up, and Errett got Viking and Harlem, and Nourse got Knopf--and who else? I forget who else. At any rate, originally the older gentleman sold me. Then later Jim sold me, Jim, Jr.

And I remember the first time he came to call on me. He had just gotten out of the service. He had been a flier, and from what I hear--what I found out later--quite a heroic one. He was in the drink a couple of times, rescued, and went right back flying. He never mentioned it, never talked about it. And I remember the first time he called on me. The poor youngster was so worried--well, not worried, but nervous. He had his talk all made up. And every time I asked him a question, it would stop the flow of his talk, and he had to start over again. He sort of memorized his speech, and I always kid him about that. I ask him if he still forgets his speech. And he became a good man. Then he and his brother now represent several publishers. They're doing an excellent job. And they did extremely well.

The father made a lot of money in real estate up around Los Altos or San Carlos--or somewhere up there in the Bay Area. The boys are quite well-to-do, but extremely nice, nice people.

This is sort of another family affair. There's a chap name of John Storm I should mention. His widow is presently the manager of the Hollywood Pickwick Bookstore. And I knew him first when he had a little tiny store on West Sixth Street, west of Vermont. He had come out from Chicago and attempted to start a store, quite small, and I don't think he quite made it. He went back to Chicago and somehow got a job selling for a publisher. He represented several houses. He did a good job for quite a number of years, but the poor chap died before his time. In one of those pictures I have, I think I showed you where we're playing poker at a bookman's field day, and we're all three of us--Ben Burke, and he, and I--so intensely watching our cards. Well, I'm the only one left of those three in that picture.

Bob MacDonald is one of the older men who did a very good job with me, representing Prentice-Hall. He had been in the book business for many years in the city before he went with Prentice-Hall. He was with the Los Angeles News Company in the days when the Los Angeles News Company was the only wholesaler out here. They were a part of the American News Company, which was a national chain of wholesalers of magazines and books and various kinds of stationery. After he left the News Company, he went to work for Prentice-Hall. He did an excellent job for them. And I see him occasionally.

Bill McCullough is the nephew of Harrison Leusler and took over the territory when Harrison retired. Unlike his uncle, he was not a hard-sell salesman, but he was a good salesman, [with a] very nice, nice personality. He has a territory in the San Francisco area. He gets down here once in a while, and we meet.

Ernie Greenspan has Crown and the Crown-related companies of reprints, Outlet--a very, very large business. He, too, is not one of the first-generation salesmen but the second generation. He does an excellent job, and he helped us a great many ways on developing remainders and learning to advertise remainders. And he fulfilled, again, that purpose of teaching us, and he would learn a great deal from us--what happens after we advertise a remainder, which ones move and which ones don't. And we created a different kind of ad. They used to have these ads made up for remainders mostly run by department stores. When we first wanted to run an ad, that's exactly the kind of an ad they wanted us to run. I said, "No." I said, "That's not the kind of an ad I want." I said, "I don't like their mix of books, either. You have much better books, from my point of view, to advertise than those that they advertise." They would advertise forty-nine-cent fiction. I said, "I'm not interested in advertising forty-nine-cent fiction. It doesn't mean a thing to me. I don't think it would mean much to my customers. We've got a different type of trade."

Well, by give and take, we told them what we wanted, and they learned on their own that we could do a better job by our own selections than the prearranged selections that they made up for department stores. The department store buyers were not knowledgeable enough of books to make up their own ad. And the buyers would change every year in some areas, every three years, and there's no continuity of knowledge built up in a department store--or rarely. And in that respect, again proving the principle that one learns from the other. Ernie still calls, does a big business with the people.

Another one of the second generation, as I would call it, is Arthur Babcock, a very fine chap who did a good job. He was almost colorless in a good many ways. But he knew how to sell, even without the color. He was extremely honest about what he wanted to sell you. If he didn't think that you could sell a book and you wanted it, you almost had to beg him to sell you a copy. Of course, in my case, I always bought, well, less than what they tried and more of what they didn't try. But he's retired, too, now.

There's a young--not young anymore--woman by the name of Betty Gaskill who calls on us, one of the few women publisher's representatives in the trade, a very enthusiastic person. She had a little bookstore in Van Nuys for a number of years--she and her husband. She became a widow,

and she became a salesperson for a publisher. She was one of the first that ever showed up around here. And she's doing an excellent job--a very enthusiastic person.

Then, you might say, just for the record, I should mention Jim Mottola, who sold here for McGraw-Hill for a number of years--a very fine salesman. He knew his lines, and he knew how to sell. He's now in the Chicago area.* Frank Scioscia. A great many people, maybe, in UCLA might know Frank. He was quite a literary person. He had a nice library of books, which he sold when he left here. He went to work for Harper's and sold them for a while. He's from the Northwest. I think he worked for J.K. Gill for a while and was an excellent salesman, really was. Now he's with Harper's in the home office. I don't know exactly his position, but of course he still has something to do with selling. Unfortunately I heard that he recently had a heart attack. I wrote him. I haven't heard any answer, and I hope he's getting along well.

Lou Eaton, I should mention. Lou Eaton started, I believe, working for World Book Company. I think he married a daughter of the owner of the firm. And Ann and I met him for the first time at a convention in Chicago, I believe it was--at the convention there. And we were introduced. And a look came over his face. We were talking for a little

---

* Mottola recently died.--[L.E.]

while, and he pulls me aside, sits me down over somewhere. We sat down, and he said, "I can't help but tell you that you have exactly the same name as I have. My name is Louis Epstein, too." He said he went to work selling bibles. At that time, World Publishing Company was the biggest publisher of bibles in the country. And they had their salesmen go out. And he had the southern territory, and he said, "How the hell was I going to get into the door with the name Louis Epstein?" So he changed it to Lou Eaton. But I think any knowledgeable person would recognize him after he had talked to him a few minutes.

Eddie Ponger was a very nice person who is no longer in this territory. He represented Simon and Schuster here for a number of years--a very nice man, quite a lot younger than I was. He became a good friend of the family; he and Aaron and the others all got along. He likes to tell the story about the way I worked in comparison to the way some other booksellers work. He said that even at my age--and I was in my sixties--that with his line the buyers of a department store or some other store would ask for two days to look it over. But, he said, I always went all through it in one day--with all my interruptions. And he said many times when he was all worn out at five o'clock, and nowhere near finished, that I would insist that we continue, that he had to drag himself home. I suppose that's a little bit apocryphal, but it's a good story.

Jack Dawley, who represents Simon and Schuster now--who took Eddie Ponger's place with Simon and Schuster--before that was with Harper. Jack Dawley was with Harper; he was hired by Frank Scioscia. Jack is one of the first black salesmen in the West. He does an excellent job--a very fine person--and he is the kind of person that could go anywhere if he wasn't black. But I suppose that even in the publishing business, a number of areas are still closed to him. But he still--he's about middle-aged now--has a lot of opportunity. And he may go back to Harper. There's some little bit of rumor that he might go back; I don't know. He's doing an excellent job and is a good friend of ours.

Georgie Kellogg, George Kellogg, represented Grosset and Dunlap for a great many years out here and did a good job. A peculiar character, he was almost too frank with his bosses. They never gave him the recognition that he should have had, I think because he was overly frank with them. In other words, if he saw something wrong, he stepped right out and said it, and sometimes you just can't do that in a large organization. But he did an excellent job of selling. He's now retired, enjoys his fishing, and I mentioned him because he was a good salesman and he had been around for a long time.

Bill Webb has been selling for about fifteen years, but I still call him one of the younger men. And he's

an extremely literate person. He represents a number of houses--Watson-Guptill, which sells a lot of art books, how-to art books. He does a good job. He's a forceful seller, sometimes too forceful. But on the whole, we had a satisfactory relationship between the Pickwick and he, and he depended on me for a great deal of what he learned. He told me so. And I think I mentioned before a number of the people said, "Well, I always go sell Louie first, because by the time I get through selling Louie, I've learned my line"--which may or may not be true. (They all called me Louie.) I told what I thought of the line, anyway. At least, by the way I bought, they knew what I liked. And I think I was probably as good a bellwether as anybody.

Bill Chaffee, I haven't mentioned yet, I don't think. Bill was around for quite a number of years. He sold a number of publishers, including Bobbs-Merrill. A very aggressive salesman, inclined to be hard sell. He did a good job, but I'm not positive that he was totally happy in the book business. But he did well. He was with the Nourse boys for a while. But he had a disagreement with one of the publishers he represented, and they sort of forced him out of that organization, out of the Nourse group. They told him that if Bill was going to continue to sell the line, that they would have to give up the line--which, of course, they didn't want to do, so Bill was asked to resign. Which was a terrific blow to his ego, and I

knew about what type of argument it was. It was a clash of personalities. Bill was sometimes a little pugnacious, and that affected his relationship with people. But on the whole he's a very fine man, and I still maintain a very nice friendship with him. He's retired, living at Sedona, Arizona, in that valley that runs right through from Prescott. As you go from Prescott to Flagstaff, you go through part of it. And I talk to him on the telephone occasionally.

A young man name of Ernest Callman--I still call him a young man. He used to work for me and went to selling. And then there are a number of others I could mention, like Herb Chapin was a newer person, Harry Smith, Mel Dir, Fred Hill, George Corey, Geoffrey Barr, Bill Reynolds.

Bill Reynolds--I have a little story about him. A great churchman, when he first started calling on us, he represented a religious house. Then he represented the Harper religious line, and then he had another religious line. Later he went to work selling trade books, and his job was combined out of the job in some way or other by some new setup in the selling. So he got a job selling Lippincott, which, of course, is a regular trade house. And about a year and a half ago, I parked in back of the Pickwick, and he parked in back of the Pickwick with a woman. And he introduced me to her. And then we went into the shop, and she was to autograph books. And a

most unlikely woman to ever find with a character such as Bill Reynolds--she was a woman who shot her husband, who was a collector of guns up around San Jose. The case was in the papers. She claimed she shot him in self-defense, and they found a whole arsenal in this home. I talked to him about it later. I said, "Well, I am not keeping my eye on you, so here you go with company such as that."

Oh, I should mention Russell Goodrich, who was around for years and years--a very fine chap who sold Merriam-Webster dictionaries who is now retired. Henry Caster sold Doubleday for a number of years out here. Dave Bramble used to live down the hill here for a while. He was a salesman whose wife inherited a lot of money. So he went out of the bookselling business. Joe Carroll, who represented Scribner--a very fine, very religious Irish Catholic. He did a good job of selling Scribner. Well, he's long gone now. Al Doering, who was the general manager for Grosset on the West Coast, was an excellent salesman. He, poor guy, is gone. Oh, Bill Gordon, Wilmot Gordon, who represented Oxford University Press for years--one of the finest gentlemen, a real gentleman, a good salesman, knew how to sell, soft sell, and did an excellent job. He lives part time in Mexico and part in Pasadena. Herb Chapin is relatively new; Frank Corsello is relatively new. Helen Kosick, who was for years with the Los Angeles News Company: later, when that went out of business, she went to work for Dial

Delacorte. And she called on the trade for a while. Bob Wilkie's one of the newer men. George O'Hara represents World. He's represented, over the years, many different houses. He called on me only a few years, but I've known him for a great many years. And my wife says--that's her theory--he was responsible for me getting involved with the ABA, that he was the one that called to the attention of the office of the ABA: "We've got a good man here for the board." Ted Moss, who's now sales manager for Dial, sold us for a while. Bill Maher. These are all names that should be in the records somehow or other. A chap by the name of Harry Smith first sold me paperback. He originally sold me reprints when I was still on Eighth Street. I'm sure I left out some people, but I think I've got most of the important gentlemen--and some of them are really fine gentlemen. They're all nice men, but some were more polished than others. Karl Placht--I think I mentioned him in connection with Brentano's. He later became a salesman, represented Dutton for a great many years. Let's see, Louis Freedman, I told you about. Oh, Jack O'Leary represented Doubleday for a while here; now he's a big man in the head office.

TAPE NUMBER: XII, SIDE TWO

AUGUST 13, 1974

GARDNER: Today I'd like to talk first about the Southern California Booksellers Association. I know you don't have all the dates on hand. What brought the group together? What sorts of problems brought the group together?

EPSTEIN: Well, the Southern California Booksellers Association was one of those intermittent things that would start up when some occasion presented itself or some emergency came up, such as postage rates or police action about pornography, or--as in the last case--the advertising program called "Cavalcade of Books." That started perking around 1951, and they came around to us--Jack and Frances Case. Jack Case was an advertising man in the city, very well known. He's in his eighties now and lives down near, oh, San Juan Capistrano somewhere, now.* But he was an Olympic champion hurdler way back around 1912 or '16--I forget which of the two. A very fine person, he'd been in the advertising business. His wife was Frances Case, a very promotional-minded woman and a very aggressive type of businesswoman. And the two of them came up with the idea of having a television program about books. And they brought it to two or three of us, brought the program to mind. None of us really thought it would go over, but because they were willing to

* Jack Case has since died.--[L.E.]

put in their time and effort, we said, well, we would gamble a few hundred dollars each. I believe it was Vroman's of Pasadena, and myself, Bob Campbell, and Fowler, I think, and Walter Martindale. We each put in relative amounts of money--not the same amount, but how much we were willing to risk. There was no profit to us, except that if we got a program, which would be supported mostly by the publishers' advertising allowances, it would do us all good. But we didn't think that the publishers would come across to that extent, to make it feasible and worthwhile for the Cases to put in their time and effort. But they were good promoters and very hard workers, and they got the thing going. And for a couple of years the booksellers, some of us booksellers, put in some money.

But to get the backing for the program, they revitalized the Southern California Booksellers Association. Now this is not to be confused with the Southern California Antiquarians. This was the new-book sellers. It got the program started. Jack did a lot of excellent work on it and excellent promotion. They planned it very nicely, and for a while the program went over big. It was new, it had a lot of new faces on it, and it was an interesting program--not for the literary person, necessarily, but for the literate viewer of TV. The "Cavalcade of Books" would have guests on it, usually the authors of the books, or, if it was an unusual book, maybe some outside guest of prominence to

review that particular book. The program itself--well, we have a copy of one of their programs here. They would review about four or five books, and they would have two reviewers. They started off with Georgiana Hardy, who is presently on the school board, retiring next year. She was one of the reviewers.

I knew Georgiana for many years, and I knew her husband [Jack] before I knew her. He was a customer of mine when he was a very young lawyer. He was in one of those buildings downtown with the cheaper rent, and he used to come and buy books from us. And I remember when he was first going with Georgiana. And he, poor man, died much too early in his life. She became a widow. We were quite friendly, and whenever a campaign for her came up, why, I did what I could to help her--including furnishing her with a little bit of money; it's the lifeblood of a political campaign.

But she was one of the early reviewers. And you notice on this program that I have here, one of the reviewers was Everett Noonan. Well, Everett was one of our salespeople. But he had a flair for the theatrical and had once been a hoofer, a minor hoofer. He liked to talk to groups. And he was one of the early reviewers--did a good job. It was a field that was entirely new--they had to make their way--and they built up the program very, very nicely until it reached a peak. And the peak arrived when the publishers

would use their advertising allowances for books--instead of to a general program, they switched over to direct ads in the newspapers under the name of some bookstore, such as the Pickwick. I mean, we were responsible for building the program up, we and other booksellers. But in my mind, we were also responsible for its demise, because when we started the program of publicity and advertising for the publishers, they had less money to spend on the "Cavalcade."

And the "Cavalcade," to be honest, really became a little monotonous. The format was the same. There was not a great deal of room to vary format, because if they had to cover six, seven, or eight books in a half an hour, there wasn't very much they could do except name the books, tell a little story. And if they gave one book too much time, then the publisher of that book was dissatisfied with it and complained. So they had to be always walking on a tightrope. They served their purpose, and they did a good job. But like so many things, after they'd been around a while, the public gets tired of looking. And also there was the pressure for publishers' money from the Pickwick and all the other booksellers who were now doing more individual advertising. The Pickwick established a formula--Aaron developed that over a period of time, from one step to another. So we sort of drew away a lot of the available money for that "Cavalcade of Books" program. It took a little while, but the publishers gave it good support for a while.

Then it began to drop off a little bit. They were unhappy how much time they got; they were unhappy how their book was treated; they were unhappy how the reviewer reviewed it--or whatever. All kinds of little things can happen in a relationship which is a bought relationship.

So the "Cavalcade of Books" was really the prime reason for the revival of the Booksellers Association at that time. It's still going on. They give two dinners a year--a spring dinner and a fall dinner--and the booksellers get together, have a good time. They have a few authors speaking. But it's not a public program at all now. It's good to have the organization available in case something stirs. But without a cause, it's hard to keep an organization together--which you probably know--and sometimes it drags a little bit. And the hard-to-find good officers--those who are most capable, maybe, are too busy. But it's going on. They keep an active organization. We all pay dues, and there's money in the bank to supplement the dinner. They have a good time, and a few drinks. That was '51, '52 when the Cases started that program.

GARDNER: What sort of issues and causes kept the organization together, then, after the "Cavalcade of Books" folded?

EPSTEIN: Just promoting these dinners, and still promotion for the "Cavalcade." And when the "Cavalcade" ceased, why, the organization went on, just to give a couple of dinners a year, really, and get together once in a while

in a business meeting and discuss problems. But even those, we haven't been doing too much lately. The dinner is about the only activity that they're having now. The salesmen are invited, publisher's representatives, and usually they have a couple hundred people show up, and about three, four good speakers--authors whose books are presently current--and have a good time. If anything comes up that's dangerous to the book trade, we have an organization that is ready to act if necessary. There have been a lot of problems in the book business, but none of the type that an organization can discuss. The organizations have to be extremely careful what they discuss; we can't discuss discounts. It's against the law.

GARDNER: Because of price fixing.

EPSTEIN: Price fixing. We can't discuss publisher terms. We can discuss things that are wrong--poor packing, or poor shipping, or late shipping, those types of problems--but not anything that relates to the actual cost or sale price of merchandise. So that eliminates a lot of discussion. A lot of that is done, of course, but in the cloakroom, you might say, one to one. You can't talk to two people about it. Even to one, you can't say, "Well, look, if you price your book this price, I'll price mine the same," or, "You quit buying from this man and I'll quit buying; maybe it'll force down his price." Can't talk that.

GARDNER: But does that happen?

EPSTEIN: It happens in all business; of course, it happens. But it's never serious to the extent that: "We should do this," but nobody says, "Let's do this." There's a difference. You can talk in the air: "Publishers are charging us too much money." Or, "Their discount is too small; we should get 43 percent instead of 40." "We should be getting . . . ." But nobody actually says, "Well, let's stop buying unless we get 43." Or, "Don't trade with this publisher." There's a line between the legal and the illegal, and we try not to tread across the line.

So far there has been only one suit that I remember that the Federal Trade Commission has filed against publishers, and that was when a number of large publishers started publishing library editions. They had been publishing library editions, but they were selling them through wholesalers. There were certain special wholesalers who would buy these library editions, or buy the sheets and put on their own binding. And the publishers adopted a schedule of discounts--every publisher exactly on the same sliding scale. A retail bookseller couldn't buy those books at that discount. He had to be in a certain business and buy certain quantities, and the retail bookseller was practically frozen out of that edition. You've seen them--mostly children's books in heavy bindings for libraries. From the beginning, I recognized it as totally illegal--not that we wanted to handle any of those editions because we never did get a discount on them.

But at least, even if we wanted them now, we couldn't get any discount--or nowhere near the discount that the other people were getting. Well, one of the booksellers--somewhere in Toledo, Ohio, I think--brought suit. He brought suit, for one thing, because he was excluded. Then the libraries got smart, and the libraries brought suit. They collected several million dollars from the publishers. And the publisher was guilty as hell. They were very, very stupid in the way they handled it. And now they're very, very careful what they do about their discount schedules. It has to be all the same to all, and they can't exclude anybody from doing business.

GARDNER: What is the relationship of the Southern California Booksellers to the ABA?

EPSTEIN: Just a very young stepchild.

GARDNER: It is, though. . . .

EPSTEIN: No affiliation. No official affiliation, no.

GARDNER: I see.

EPSTEIN: The American Booksellers Association has no branches.

GARDNER: Oh, I see. So, in other words, a bookstore owner becomes a member of both, really.

EPSTEIN: Right, right. He becomes a member of the local, and then he becomes a member of the national.

GARDNER: As opposed to with the Antiquarians, isn't the chapter related?

EPSTEIN: Yes. The Antiquarians has chapters. The ABA encourages regional groups, but it's not responsible for them. The ABA very much encourages groups to organize--and they'll sometimes help them organize--but they do not become officially a branch. In other words, a group of ABA members in Southern California can get together and do the things that the ABA might suggest, but they are not a branch of the ABA. They're a regional group of members; they have no official standing. But ABA cooperates. Like, we have a regional meeting of the ABA from time to time. Well, the local members get together, form a committee, and it's practically the same committee as the local Southern California Booksellers Association, practically the same group. But they have no official capacity. The Southern California group of booksellers has no official connection with the ABA. But when necessary, they will do work for the ABA, because they're the same people involved. Practically everyone in the Southern California Booksellers Association is a member of the American Booksellers Association. It's a wise policy for the American Booksellers, the national ABA, to follow, because otherwise they would have to police all these regional things and it would take away from their main aim, what they're doing.

I have here a few notes of some of the original people. I here have a copy of the minutes of the August 28, 1952:

"A Report of the Reorganization Committee, presented to the August 28, 1952, meeting of the Southern California Booksellers Association. The Reorganization Committee recommends the following . . ."--president, vice-president, and so forth-- . . . "these five members will comprise the Board of Directors. The following members are recommended for nomination to these offices: a) President, Louis Epstein; b) Vice-President, Paddy Paddock; c) Secretary, Otis Yost; and d) Treasurer, Lloyd Severe; e) Bob Campbell"--I don't know what his title is. It's something or other.

GARDNER: Where were Paddy Paddock and Otis Yost from? I don't remember those names.

EPSTEIN: Paddy Paddock--I've never considered him really serious as a bookseller. He had a stationery store and bookstore in Glendale. And he carried a stock of books, but stationery was his principal business. But he's a very aggressive young man--at the time, young. And he talked well and so forth, so they made him an officer. He later became very much involved in Republican politics in Glendale. I don't think he ever ran for office, but he became very political. One time, at a meeting, he started making what most of us thought was a political speech, and we piped him down.

GARDNER: What about Otis Yost? I don't recall that name.

EPSTEIN: Otis Yost at that time was working for Vroman's.

GARDNER: I notice that announcement is on Vroman's letterhead, for the record.

EPSTEIN: Yes. Vroman's was very much involved then. Well, at that time Vroman's was the major wholesaler here. Otis later became a salesman for Harper and moved up to the Bay Area. And he still is. We just saw him here a few months ago at a function, and he was very happy to see me.

Of course, Lloyd Severe was very much involved for many, many years. He was involved both in the group and also in the Jack Case program, the "Cavalcade of Books." He later became financially involved in it. He was with Brown's Book Store, in Pasadena, and then left them later; he retired from there, and went to work for Jack Case. See, Frances Case died, and she was one of the principal workers. She had carried at least half of the load of the whole thing. So when she died, Jack had to have some help. Lloyd Severe helped him a lot. Lloyd has helped in everything in Southern California bookselling. He was very dedicated to the book business as a business. And he deserves a lot of credit for keeping this thing going.*

I don't know what else I can tell you about the Southern California Booksellers. They paid their bills. They went along. And we had good support from all the bookstores of Southern California. Let me see what's here.

---

* Gladys and Lloyd recently had a sixtieth wedding anniversary which Ann and I attended.--[L.E.]

Leslie Hood was very much involved, set up some committees. The Publishers Relations Committee was Leslie Hood, chairman. He was Vroman's, you know. One time, way back, he was with the Los Angeles News Company; that was many years ago. But Vroman's had a wholesale house, and he ran it. Tough guy, but he was a pretty good bookseller.

On the Publishers Relations Committee--Leslie Hood, Walter Martindale, Bob Campbell, Virgil Ruick. I think you heard me mention Virgil before. He was with Fowler's. A very fine man, very fine man. He died much too early.

The Publicity Committee was Harry Shelton--he also was one of the owners of Vroman's--and Mrs. [Marjorie] Dysinger of Whittier Book Shop, and Bob Campbell. The Membership Committee is Paddy Paddock, Otis Yost, [Willard] Marriner (Marriner has a bookstore down in the Laguna area somewhere; I don't know whether his bookstore still exists or not), Lee Scott (I think he, too, was a salesman for Vroman's), Mr. [Richard J.] Pick of Pick's Book Shop in San Bernardino. He's long since retired. Well, that gives you pretty much the story of the Southern California Booksellers Association.

GARDNER: Well, maybe next we can talk about your participation in the ABA.

EPSTEIN: Oh, my. I think my wife could tell you probably more about that than I.

GARDNER: How far back does it date, first of all?

EPSTEIN: Membership dates way back, but the participation dates back about thirteen years. Let's see, let's go backwards. Well, my memory for dates has never been good.

GARDNER: Why don't we turn it off for a second. [tape stopped]

EPSTEIN: You asked me about my activities in the American Booksellers Association, and how did they come about. Like all those things, they evolved. Number one, I was active in the local group, and a certain amount of publicity reaches out and gets into the Publisher's Weekly, and the name becomes a little known. One of the principal things that might have caused the directors of the American Booksellers Association to think of me as a future director was an event that occurred in 1955 which was under the auspices of the American Booksellers Association. It was what they call a regional meeting. They started program meetings in various areas of the country, and all the members of the American Booksellers Association would gather, and they'd have a business meeting for one day or two days. In this instance, I think it was a two-day meeting. And you know, we'd have a dinner, and all the booksellers would get together. And the executive director of the ABA came out, and his secretary, and they'd tell us how to set up the meetings. And they had discussion panels of various topics. I was on one of the panels. And it was a panel pertaining

to discounts, and, well, primarily to shipping, receiving, and so forth. A lot of things overlapped, but what we were talking about were the problems the booksellers had with the publishers, that, if they would do certain things--do better bookkeeping, do better reporting--the trade as a whole would benefit. They would benefit just as much as the publishers. The waste of time that lack of system creates--that time wasted, that effort wasted, writing back and forth, not having the invoice on time, and all these many, many problems--poor packing. And I was on one of the panels. Not only was I on one of the panels, but I participated quite a good deal in discussion. And I spoke out. I probably spoke out maybe more than I should have, but I felt very strongly about those things. I expressed my opinion, and I didn't hesitate to criticize. I mean, I tried to make the criticism fair. But you get carried away, apparently. You know, you start building up a case the same as anyone else.

But at any rate, I must have left a good impression on the executive director, and George O'Hara, who was at that time one of the salesmen--I think at that time he was with Farrar Rinehart--came to me after the meeting. And he said, "Louis, you did a marvelous job." I was chairman of the panel, and I had participated. He said, "You did a marvelous job with that panel." And he was good friends with Joe Duffy. Duffy was the executive director. And I think

he must have spoken to Duffy--and I got along very well with Duffy, too. Duffy also congratulated me on how well I handled myself. By no means am I a speaker, but I speak out when I have to. Now, a few months later, I was invited to be on the board of the American Booksellers Association. I think I started on the board in 1956. And then I stayed on the board. I became an officer, a vice-president, second vice-president, and so forth. Finally, in 1964, I was elected president.

And when I would go back to meetings two or three times a year, go back to New York, the people on the board of the American Booksellers Association--at least the board that I sat on all along--we worked very hard. And we took all the problems very seriously. When I first came on the board, we had very little money; the organization had very little money because the expenses would eat up the dues. We had to keep a permanent office in New York. Well, it's a national organization. The mailings, and whatever--a lot of expenses. And we ran the convention. Our principal source of income was not from dues, but from the profits of the convention. Well, for quite a while the profits of the convention were very slim. But as the book business expanded--during that period between the late fifties or early sixties and the seventies, the book business has expanded tremendously. I don't know if you're aware of that: the paperback explosion, and the best-seller explosion, and

whatnot. The total volume of books expanded, and there were a great many more new publishers. So there was more demand for space at our convention. And as the demand for space became greater and the publishers, for a while there, became more affluent, we raised our dues. And the organization began to build up a reserve. By the time I retired as president, we had quite a bit of money--well over $150,000 in assets, in actual cash assets. So they started doing other things.

But speaking of my work on the American Booksellers Association: it was arduous at times. Certain problems would come up with publishers, and certain things, as a trade organization, you're not allowed to do, as I mentioned to you before. And we were just stymied how to act. We had to act as individuals, but if we could spread the word. . . . So many individuals started protesting on their own that we solved a lot of problems in a quiet way. One of the nicest things we did was [that we] created the publisher-bookseller relations committee. We created the committee about the third or fourth year I was on the board. And it's amazing how many problems we solved by sitting down on opposite sides of a table--either have a lunch first or dinner afterward--and one to one, friendly basis. Nobody blew their stacks, like you do get up at a panel meeting sometimes. You create an antagonistic feeling. Although

there is an antagonism--buyer and seller--always; one always wants to get the best possible deal, one side or the other. Nevertheless, it should not be an antagonism that is total, especially in the book business, because you can only buy Macmillan books from Macmillan, and you can only buy Random House books from Random House, and they can only sell them to booksellers. And if we take their books and don't push them--hide them in a corner--they know they're not going to sell any books. So they have to keep up a reputation. So there's a mutual necessity for creating a working relationship. And it, to my mind, is such a stupid thing. The problems, one by one, are not major. All together they become major. Well, occasionally there are major problems. Some new publisher appoints a person who has never been in the book business, doesn't understand the book business, and he lays down a set of rules which are totally unfit for the book business. Maybe he came out of the grocery trade or a large manufacturing establishment. One person came out of Singer Sewing Machine. Well, it's a great big company. They manufacture computers and everything. Incidentally, we just recently got a person from Singer Sewing Machine who's now the head of the book division of Dayton-Hudson, a chap by the name of Floyd Hall.

GARDNER: Is that so?

EPSTEIN: So there's an idea what poor Elliot Leonard has

to get along with. I'm glad I'm not there. So we formed this committee, and it became one of the most important committees, talking out problems with publishers. Also when I used to go to the conventions--I say "used to"; I've only missed one so far--I used to get a lot of difficulties settled in the aisles, talking to the publishers.

GARDNER: Lobbying.

EPSTEIN: Lobbying. I'd get them aside and talk to them and say, "Look. Listen to me for a minute." And I would draw them a diagram. "You don't want to give me this. This other publisher gives me this, so I do a better job for him. This company gave me advertising allowances, so what happened? We found out that every bookstore in the community benefits by an ad run under my name. The only advantage I get out of the ad is that people who haven't got a regular bookstore who might want to mail in an order will send it to me because my name is on it. But for that, I do all the work for you with the newspaper. You don't have a thing to do with it. You just give me the copy, give me the money, and we will set it up for you." And we had to convince them. It took us years to do that. And things of that nature, or shipping charges, we would try to make a standard. And that is the purpose of an organization: to control their own members; to teach their own members; and to create a certain amount of public

relations for the trade as a whole, for books; and to support things pertaining to books, like Book Week, National Book Week for libraries--support libraries, support the National Book Award and certain things of that nature; to fight for favorable postage rates and freight rates wherever we can (we have a representative in Washington); copyright--well, we're not that much concerned with copyright, except there are areas in which the retail bookseller is concerned with copyright. So this was the purpose of the organization, and I learned all those things, gradually. I think I sat on the board for nine years, president for two years, and chairman of the board for two years. So I had that relation over a period of thirteen years. And that thirteen years, I think the book business made its greatest strides in dollar volume. I certainly don't take credit for that.

GARDNER: Just coincidental.

EPSTEIN: The change in the book business. . . . And there were a lot of problems that came up because of it, especially with the new publishers. We had to keep our director--give him directives from the board. It's an important job, sitting on the board of the American Booksellers Association. It's important because it represents such a great number of booksellers, and booksellers are definite assets to the cultural well-being of this country. We tried to educate them to be better booksellers, to be better businessmen.

We created a lot of programs that were excellent.

Now Joe Duffy has died. He's the guy I worked with. We became very close friends. I showed you a picture of him sitting by the pool, I think. Now they have a new executive director [Roysce Smith], and they're doing very well. And incidentally, Elliot Leonard just completed a two-year term [as president]; he just left office at the last convention--so that Pickwick has had two presidents in a relatively short period of time.

GARDNER: Which I'm sure is unique among Southern California bookstores.

EPSTEIN: Well, it is unique that there were two so close together from Southern California. And perhaps I shouldn't say it, but the eastern booksellers don't--well, they're less provincial now than they were. But the New England-New York bunch--it was really tough on a westerner. And I was surprised when I was picked for president. You know, you don't politick for it, and I was very pleased, and very proud, and very gratified.

GARDNER: What is the political process by which the president is chosen?

EPSTEIN: The president appoints a nominating committee--on which he does not sit--of three people. And they appoint a man to be president.

GARDNER: Is it usually taken from the board?

EPSTEIN: Oh, yes. I mean, there's no reason why it shouldn't

be, because they're the experienced people. For instance, I sat on the board for nine years, which is the maximum you can sit on the board unless you become an officer or president. It's only fair and logical, because to get a man green from the outside--number one, he's got to learn the ropes. It took me maybe two years. Sitting on my first two years on the board, I had to be quiet because I didn't know the background of all the things that led up to what they were talking about. So it takes at least two, three meetings--unless you're very forward--before you step out and say something, unless it happens to be in an area in which you're very professional. We've had our problems on the board. People became unhappy and criticized the ABA for certain things--the way we run our convention.

GARDNER: What are the criticisms?

EPSTEIN: Well, especially newcomers, people who don't understand the purpose of the organization and don't understand the value of the organization, they will join the American Booksellers Association and come to a convention thinking that overnight they'll become book people, that the whole convention will be tied to their desire to learn the basics of bookselling. Well, that's not what the convention is for. One woman in particular wrote a very, very nasty letter to the Publisher's Weekly. She was from Long Beach, incidentally. I was president. And I didn't hear

about the letter till just before it was published. The Publisher's Weekly sent a copy to Joe Duffy to get somebody to make a reply. The letter said that she had been in the book business now for a period of about five months, and she'd read about the convention, that the convention was going to give her all kinds of classes in how to sell books. Well, she went to the convention. She said nobody paid any attention to her. She was invited to a first-timers', and she was told that she can stop any director at any time. We announce that: go and ask questions of the publishers who are exhibiting. At any rate, she went on and on in a tirade that the whole thing was run for the publishers: the publishers get the best seats at the dinners, the publishers will only talk to the top-notch booksellers or the largest booksellers, and nobody would talk to her, and the publishers threw parties for everybody, the publishers even hired girls to be hostesses at the parties. Which in itself is okay. Here's a publisher having a big party; he's got to have somebody. But she insinuated they were there for a purpose.

GARDNER: Did they invite her to the parties?

EPSTEIN: Everyone was invited. Everyone registered gets an invitation. The publisher will give them. And even if you're not invited, you see a party going on at those conventions, you walk in. Lord knows how many gate-crashers come to the hotel to get good and drunk at those places.

Nobody asks any questions. You just walk in, say "Hi," and grab a drink, and that's all. So you invent something. If a guy's a gate-crasher, he knows how to get around.

At any rate, this woman--it was the most horrible, unjust letter. And so I sat down and wrote a letter back for the ABA. I said, "Look, I've been going to conventions for all these many, many years, since before I was a member of the board. I don't get treated any differently than I was the first time. I used to come in; I'd walk down the aisles. I would learn by asking a question or two and talking to other booksellers. If I needed any help, there's 100 people I could go to and ask for help. Stop anybody." And I said, "In my case, I feel that I've gotten a great deal out of every convention. It's certainly broadened my outlook. I talked to booksellers who were doing this, that, and the other. We'd get up when they'd have panel discussions for two days." I said, "I just don't understand this. And as far as getting along with publishers, accusing the publishers of treating big booksellers better than the small ones," I said, "look, I've been through it all the way up." And I said, "I didn't notice where the publisher treated me any differently when my volume went over a million than they did when my volume was 100,000 or less."

And they get criticism like that, all unnecessary

criticism. But apparently, that's the end of the glass that some people look through, the wrong end of the telescope. They expect too much. Well, this woman apparently expected to become a full-fledged bookseller in three nights. But she came to a sad end. This is really sad. She died, I think of cancer. I was going to go up to see her, but she went out of business. I met her only once. I met her one time after that. I never met her before that. It was at a place where I couldn't get away to talk to her. It was at an affair. I would have liked to talk to her. But she dropped out of the business anyway. Her whole attitude was wrong. I don't think she'd have succeeded in any business.

Well, that's the American Booksellers Association. It's a good organization. Right now it's embarked on a program of teaching professional bookselling--which we wanted to do for many years, but we didn't have the staff nor the money. Before Joe Duffy died, they made a deal with the Association of College Bookstores. They had a program going, so they combined the two programs, and this was very successful. They've been spending a lot of money on it. As a matter of fact, I think last year the ABA came up with almost zero profit because they spent so much money on the school and other programs. As I told them, they'd better not go back to operating off the fat we helped build up. It's dangerous. True, I mean that. But I think it's in good hands now.

TAPE NUMBER: XIII, SIDE ONE

AUGUST 13, 1974

GARDNER: You were about to tell me about the chap who is president now of ABA.

EPSTEIN: Yeah. Dick Noyes of Colorado Springs, another Western man. I remember when he came on the board--very intelligent, a relatively younger man. He's forty-two or three. And he and his wife run a very nice store in Colorado Springs. We visited them just a couple of weeks ago. We were in Denver. We had been in Denver before, and he heard about it, and he pushed me into the ground because I didn't go the extra hundred miles to visit him. I promised him next time I was in Denver I would visit him, so we did. And we had a very nice time with him. It's an excellent store for a small community. And he runs it very well, carries a very good stock, and [he's] very businesslike. And financially he's doing extremely well. He mentioned the kind of lease he had, and it's out of this world. Rents now for most booksellers are extremely high--well, like all rents, I suppose. But he has a very beautiful lease, which he's had for some time, and which goes on for some time. But we had a nice visit with him. He's aggressive enough to say what he has to say and recognize truth from fiction. He'll make a good president.

GARDNER: I know how attached you always were to Pickwick. So what were some of the things that you did during your term as president of ABA that took you away from Pickwick?
EPSTEIN: What other things? Well, the organization has a program to follow. They have problems come up, membership problems, finances. Problems come up with the publishers--how much to spend for this, that, or the other, how much to spend, for instance, to start the school.
GARDNER: Did you do much traveling around the country, things like that? What were some of the things, during your two years?
EPSTEIN: For me, getting away from Pickwick was always inconvenient. But by the same token, I always did what I had to do. We went to board meetings twice a year. I never liked New York, and I still don't, so if we had a board meeting on Friday, I would leave Thursday, get there Thursday evening, spend the night; and immediately after the board meeting on Friday, by six o'clock, I was on the plane on the way home. And then when I was on the Executive Committee, then I would have to come in for an extra day because we would meet a day before the board. So I would have to spend two days. But that's the most time I would spend in New York. Occasionally there would be something else that would keep me in New York an extra day. But then they had regional meetings, two a year, in one part of the country or another; and we adopted a system

where the president of the organization would go to that meeting with the director. Originally, the first regional meetings we had, only the director would come out with a secretary to help run the thing. Later on, they decided, on my suggestion, that it would be very nice if the president would appear at those meetings. And I was not president at the time, but I thought it would be good for the organization, for the people who don't come to the conventions, to meet the president. We'd get a little extra publicity out of it, and I thought the organization would become more cohesive--which turned out exactly right. So we had the regional meetings, and I had to go to those. I used to take Ann to most of those. Those used to take two or three days.

Then there's correspondence back and forth, and telephoning back and forth, with the problems that occur, membership problems and such. It took a great deal of time. But, look, it's something you want to do, and you do it, and I certainly don't regret it. I enjoyed it. All the things in life you do interfere with something else you might do. Some you like to do better, you do better than others. I enjoyed the work in ABA, enjoyed it very much. And I think it did a great deal for me because I was not much of a traveler. I never got around too much. It helped broaden my outlook tremendously--I mean, when I talked with booksellers. Some of them had businesses

that had been established for fifty to a hundred years. And I always thought they were almost superhuman. And I discovered that in some respects they were not as good booksellers as I, so it gave me a great deal more confidence, built me up and encouraged me to do bigger things which I might have been fearful of doing. With confidence comes the will to do, as a rule--to expand. As long as we had only one store, we expanded our business within that store by doing things we might have been afraid to do had I not seen the world more--if you follow what I mean. So the ABA did a great deal for me, and I think I did a little bit for it.

GARDNER: Bob Campbell was president of ABA after the late forties?

EPSTEIN: Bob Campbell was president, but, oh, at least twenty years before I.

GARDNER: How come he was participating in it then, and you even really a part?

EPSTEIN: Well, Bob always has been a joiner. And I wouldn't say that he participated in that as a joiner, but it was a different kind of an organization then. It was almost a closed club. I'm not knocking Bob, but that's the way the organization was. Their goals were nowhere near the goals that we had during the time I served on the board. And even now the goals are totally different. And the book business was different in those days. I pointed out a

picture to you there where there were three past presidents, including Bob Campbell, and that was my first attendance at a convention. And sure enough, fifteen or so years later, I became a past president. So now that whole picture is four past presidents.

GARDNER: What other Southern California people have been presidents? Are you, Elliot Leonard, and Bob Campbell the only ones?

EPSTEIN: Well, there's a chap here who was president, I think, even before Bob Campbell, when he was in business in New York. But he was not anybody I would consider a westerner.

GARDNER: He was not a Southern California bookseller.

EPSTEIN: But for the record, he lives out here now; he was a salesman out here after he left New York. He left the retail business and went to work for a publisher. Karl Placht. German--very nice person. He was sent out here by Brentano's to run the Brentano stores. When they tried to break in here many years ago--which is a totally different Brentano's than it is now. That's all I can recall.

GARDNER: So you're the only ones. Well, I think that covers ABA then.

EPSTEIN: Well, I think so. One can go on and talk about it endlessly. It's an important organization for the book trade. The membership has grown tremendously. Their services to members and some of their publications are very helpful. They

publish a handbook which saves a tremendous amount of time for book dealers, an informational handbook. And then they have access to other information if they need it, from the home office. They provided all these extra services. Then they have something which is called Single Copy Order Plan--SCOP--which was devised during the time I was on the board. I helped plan it, and I'm certainly not alone in it. It was a mutual effort. It allows a bookseller to order one copy of a book at a much better discount than he ever had before. But this is what he has to do: he has to send a check with the order, and the order is shipped directly to the customer. So just one transaction: no bookkeeping for the publisher, no bookkeeping for the bookseller. So that made a very unprofitable transaction a little bit more profitable. And it's to the great benefit of the smaller bookstores, because the larger booksellers, the real large stores, can't use it. They can if they set up a special system, and some of them have, where they have a special check drawn. You have to have a special checking account, a special type of check drawn. Large corporations don't like that. They don't like somebody in some department, or in some branch, signing checks. So they don't use that. It's a boon to the smaller bookseller. Also to the publisher: they can give a better service to the bookseller, and they're no money out. They got their money right with the order. A number of other things, they've developed.

GARDNER: Well, I'd like to get back to Pickwick for a while.

EPSTEIN: That again?

GARDNER: Well, we covered, really, up until the early fifties. I don't think we discussed the part from 1952 or '53, say, up until the time of your retirement. The first thing, to get into it gently: I wanted to ask you about those newspaper articles that you did for the Daily News, the "Mr. Pickwick" column. How did you get into that?

EPSTEIN: Oh, that. Scott O'Dell was the literary editor of the Daily News at the time. And we used to meet at cocktail parties, or book affairs of one kind or another, and we talked. We always discussed the book business. One evening, we were standing somewhere over a drink--or sitting, whatever--and he said, "I want you to do a column for me." It was a total shock to me. I said, "Look, I'm a bookseller. I'm not a writer." I said, "I'm not a literary person at all." "Well," he said, "Write the way you talk." "Oh," I said, "come on, Scott." I said, "I just don't know how to write. And besides, where will I find the time?" He said, "Well, you'll find the time." He said, "You just write about books, and book people, whatever." And you know, he just kept after me. He called me up on the telephone: "What about it, Louis? When are you going to give me a column?" So finally I said, "Well, you really

are challenging me, because I've never written anything. I'm not sure that I know English grammar well enough to write a proper paragraph." "Well, we'll take care of that." So finally, we made this deal. I would never review books--that was not my forte. I would talk about the book business. But he had to promise me that if the column stank, he wouldn't publish it; and number two, he would see to it my grammar was at least half-decent. He promised.

And you know, we started writing that column, and it just kept going. And I learned something. I learned that term "deadline." And I've learned from that. I'd heard before and I've heard since from people who write the newspapers or anything with deadline--magazines or whatever--that you never do anything until the last deadline. I had to mail my column on a Monday so it would get there by Wednesday. He had to have it by Wednesday. And I would never sit down to write the column till midnight Sunday. [laughter] I may have had a few notes scribbled out, and many times Ann would come to me and say, "Why don't you go to bed?" And there I'd be poking out that column. I wouldn't go to bed until two, three, four o'clock. I'm not a very good typist, and I'm a slow thinker, and so it used to take me about two, three, four hours. Sometimes I'd have a very nice subject, and I'd go through it.

It was really interesting work (except that it was work for me--writing is not easy for me) because I had a chance to mention things that the average person doesn't read about--authors coming through, or what other booksellers were doing. I made it a point to talk about other booksellers and their business. It wasn't a hogging column for the Pickwick at all. Occasionally I would get a fan letter, which was wine for me.

And then really I became tired. So I begged off, and he said, "Well, do it every other week, and I'll get Leslie Hood of Vroman's to do it one week." And we went along that way for a while. And the paper sort of petered out, too. But it was fun. It was something I had never anticipated ever being.

GARDNER: We've mentioned briefly your son Aaron's participation at Pickwick, but I'd like to talk about it in more detail because I think it's really important.

EPSTEIN: Well, Aaron had the hardest job of anybody in the business--he had to work for his father.

GARDNER: How did he come to it in the first place?

EPSTEIN: Well, he graduated UCLA business administration course. He went to work for Sears Roebuck. He was there about six months. And he learned a great deal about merchandising there. Aaron gets enthusiastic about something he likes, and he liked it there. So there was this business

of the Pickwick growing, and he starting out on a career. Which way to turn? Well, I always told my boys, both Eugene and Aaron, that I would love to have them in the business, but never to go into business just to please me. If they had other things to do, go ahead and do them, as long as they did a good job.

Well, then he finally decided to come into business. We taught him, little by little. In those days, we had old books. We started him in with that, and then he went into the new-book business in various departments of the store, and then to advertising. He sold books on the floor. He worked hard; he worked just as hard as any of the rest of them. He didn't want to work any less hard than the rest. And he learned the business, but he fell into the groove. His job became promotion; he liked that. And he did an excellent job of promotion. Buying was done by myself, and then he started to participate in the executive area. I ran the whole thing. I was the buyer; I ran the floor, with the help of Stackhouse and a couple of others. But I was mixed into everything. I had to hire the bookkeeper, and I had to do the executive work, and we got together for planning sessions. And gradually I tried to trim off a lot of that. And I did, to Aaron--well, some of it to Stackhouse, but Stackhouse was involved in remainders. He worked in planning and other areas, but his

main interest was remainders. At one time, when we had old books, he was in charge of that.

Aaron fell into the open area of promotion. And he did an excellent job of that. That continued more and more as the business grew, as we opened branches. He had more and more to promote. And he set up the advertising department. He hired Nick Clemente, who's still there. (They wanted Nick to go back to Minneapolis, but he said he didn't want to live in Minneapolis. He said he came out from New York to live in California. He said he wouldn't go. So they made a special dispensation for him. And one of these days he may lose his job because he won't go to Minneapolis. They may decide, "Well, heck, if you won't come here, then we don't need you." But at any rate, at least for the present. . . .) Aaron hired him; Aaron set up the basics of it. All the Pickwick ads you see around here emanate from Aaron's policy--he was the one, together with me, of course--of putting the pressure on the publisher to try the experiment: "Just give us one ad--let's try it and see what happens--on a co-op basis." They were very, very reluctant to come out here with co-op money. They would spend it in New York on the New York Times. Well, New York Times goes all over, and it's nowhere solidly. And he was the one who kept writing letters, and I kept putting pressure on the salesmen to tell their sales managers. And little by little we got

one, then we got two, then we got another one, then we got to the point where they'd want an ad--they'd call us: would we please run an ad? Mostly that was Aaron's work.

So he participated greatly in that. He participated in many other things--I mean, payrolls, and planning of money, and this, that, and the other, what to do with money. He actively participated. Well, we sat down and we talked these things out. But that was his strong forte. And I kept on buying. And this went on along, and we started expanding. I mentioned how we managed the first branch?

GARDNER: No.

EPSTEIN: I thought I told you that.

GARDNER: I don't think so.

EPSTEIN: Well, that is an interesting story. I don't know if it has any historical value. We got a phone call from Mr. [Robert E.] Getz of the May Company. Bob Getz is the son of the Getz who had the Union Bank. He's the grandson of Kaspare Cohn. Did we mention Kaspare Cohn before?

GARDNER: Well, we talked about this off the tape.

EPSTEIN: Well, to digress. People always interest me, sometimes in an area which is far different than the profession. Bob Getz, number one, we formed a very nice friendship. Occasionally I call him up and either have him buy me a lunch or I'll buy him a lunch. Neither of us are too poor to buy a lunch for ourselves, but it's a starting point. "You owe me a lunch." So at any rate, people interest me,

and the Jewish community interests me. Well, Kaspare Cohn--you will find in any book of the history of Los Angeles--was an early pioneer here. He had a retail store, supplies and retail goods which he sold to ranchers and others who would come in. And his particular group of followers were the sheepmen, sheepherders. And, you know, the sheepherders go away for six months at a time. So they would, number one, buy their stores from him, their supplies, whatever; and they would leave their money with him while they were away. And then they'd draw on it. If they needed something, they might send somebody after it with a note. They'd draw on it. And so in effect he became their banker. And from that grew a bank. And from that bank grew the Union Bank. And he became a wealthy man. And I don't want to forget, also, that from that man grew the Kaspare Cohn Hospital, which was on Whittier Boulevard, east of Indiana Street. I think it's still there, but being used for something else. And from the Kaspare Cohn Hospital grew the Cedars of Lebanon Hospital. And the Cedars of Lebanon are now the Cedar-Sinai organization. So you see the direct chain of philanthropy from Kaspare Cohn. By no means was he the only philanthropic person in Los Angeles, but he was one of the Jewish philanthropists who became philanthropists after they made money--with the Hellmans, and the Newmarks, and the Lazards. That whole early Jewish community here was mixed so well with the regular community, with the general community.

Well, Bob, to get back. . . . How this relates to Pickwick, whoever listens will often wonder. You'll have to call me "the Rambler," the way I ramble all over the place, from Jewish history to the May Company and Pickwick Bookshop branches. At any rate, Bob Getz is the grandson of Kaspare Cohn.

GARDNER: No longer Jewish, I assume.

EPSTEIN: Yes and no. Certainly not active, but with his background, how can he escape? His mother was married to Ben Getz and she had been a Cohn. He was with the Union Bank. But when they brought in the new management at the Union Bank a few years ago, he took exception to something or another--which is not unusual, you know. So he left the bank, and he got a job at the May Company as the vice-president for real estate--May Company of Southern California. Yeah. I think it's only Southern California. Now he's semi-retired. Although he was Southern California, he traveled all over the country for them.

We got a call one day. This was when? Just about '64. Would I be interested in opening a store in a shopping center? So I said, no, no. So he said to me, "Well, you answered that so casually, I'm not sure you know what I'm talking about." "Well," I said, "You asked me if I wanted to open a store in a shopping center." He said, "Yes." "And I said, no." And he said, "I don't usually get such a casual and definitive answer." He told me who he was. I had no ideas of expanding and opening another store. Oh, occasionally

we talked about it, but we were so busy. We were working so hard with what we had. Aaron was up to his neck, and I was. He said, "Well, maybe you don't know what's happening in the retail trade." And I said, "That's probably correct. I have my nose to the grindstone here. I know what's happening in the book business." So he said, "Well, I've never run across a guy like you. If I could explain to you, I'm sure you would be interested. I'll call you again. You might be more receptive." And sure enough, a week later, he called me again; and he said, "You know, I've been thinking about you." He had a very friendly voice, pleasant. He said, "I've been thinking about you, and you worry me." He said, "I know your business. There's a specific reason I'm calling you, because you run a good business. But I've never seen a businessman that didn't want to get ahead, improve his business and create more business." "Well," I said, "that may be; but the book business is a very jealous business, and it takes all my time. And to expand it. . . ." "Well," he said, "look. I'm a customer of yours. Will you do me the favor of coming down to my office? I can't bring what I want to show you with me. And let me explain what we're doing, what's happening in the retail-book business as regards shopping centers. And then you might be interested." I told him my son and I were working very hard. He said, "Bring your

son with you and anybody else you want to." So I said, "Well, if you put it on that basis--a customer asks me a favor, a courtesy--I certainly will come."

So we showed up at his office, and he shows us this whole plan of this great big shopping center out here in the Valley, the first one in the Valley. And explains all these things, and he says how many hundreds of dollars worth a square foot of business can be done in these stores, what's happening in shopping centers in other parts of the country, how this is the coming way of doing business. He still wasn't making too much of an impression on us because there was no real desire on our part to expand. Money wasn't the principal thing, at the moment, that we were thinking about; it was how much more work it was going to be. That was worrying us. Well, he went on and told us, explained to us all these things. We still weren't too impressed.

About a week later, he called us--could he come over and bring us a small set of plans? By that time, we recognized him as a nice person and a genuine person who had a real desire to have us in there. He gradually broke down our idea of not expanding. He turned us over to "maybe we'll expand, if the thing is right." And then it was his job to sell us the idea of taking a store, with the hopes of making x number of additional dollars. And he went on and told us that we could do half a million dollars worth of business at least, or at least $350,000

worth of business the first year.

GARDNER: Was this Topanga?

EPSTEIN: Topanga Plaza, yeah. I said, "Okay, I'll listen. How do we do that?" "Well," he said, "Fine. You know how to run a bookstore. I don't have to tell you how." "That part is right. But what's the mechanics of it? What do we pay you? How much money do we have to put in for fixtures and things like that?" "Okay, fine." "And then, where in the thing is this thing going to be?" Well, he got us that far, and he was telling us that we would do $300,000 worth of business--we would do $100 a square foot. $350-, $400-, $500,000. Actually there was no limit. He says, "Look, I'll take you to shopping centers where the stores are doing fantastic." And this is true. I'd begun to hear about these things. I'd never been in a shopping center.

So we sit down with a plan, and he picks out a 20- X 100-foot store. He said, "I want you to take this store." I said, "That's only 20 X 100. Bob, that's only 2,000 square feet. If I do $100 a square foot, which is very high for books, I'll do $200,000." I said, "I don't need a $200,000 business. It would take too much of our time. And if I make 10 percent, that's $20,000, and I'll have to give the government $10,000. So for $10,000 I don't want to be bothered."

So he sort of looked at me. He could recognize my arguments. "Well," he said, "what do you want?" He was sort of exasperated. So I pointed at that store at the corner. I said, "I want 40 feet right at this corner." He said, "You can't have it." I said, "Why?" He said, "You can't have it." He said, "I can't give you that space. The place is spoken for by other people." I said, "It doesn't show on the map that anybody's rented it yet." He said, "You don't understand. I just can't give it to you." I said, "Okay, Bob, thanks very much. I don't need a little bit of business. I struggled all my life to make a little bit of money, and I finally made it, and I'm above that now. I don't want to go back to that." So he said, "You're the most impossible man." I said, "Bob, look. I want a place where I can do a lot of business. That's exactly what you told me. That's why I'm here. But I can't take a small store. I wouldn't know how to run a small store." [tape stopped]

So we fought back and forth. We left that day, and he was angry with me. I wasn't overly happy about it either, because I didn't want a small store. A small store would be difficult for us to run. We called back, or--I forget--Andy, Aaron, called him or I called him. So he called back and he said, "Well, maybe we'll have to get together. Come on down to the office." So I went down there. He said, "What the hell's so magic about that 40 feet right on that

corner?" I said, "Nothing magic. I'll take 42 feet. I'll take 38 feet. But the magic 40--I had to give some area. But I don't want a small store. I don't want a 2,000-square-foot store. I want a 5,000-square-foot store." (It was 40 X 120.)

So we fought back and forth, and he finally gave it to me. We got an excellent lease; we got excellent terms. We finally opened the store, and it took off like a rocket. In the first year we did over $500,000--first full twelve months. Over $600,000. The store was doing well over a million, until they opened another shopping center in Northridge. That sort of cut the business off that center. But now it's building back again.

GARDNER: Another Pickwick in Northridge?

EPSTEIN: Well, there is another Pickwick there now, but there wasn't when they first opened.

GARDNER: Oh, it just pulled from the shopping center.

EPSTEIN: Yeah. Shopping centers steal business from each other. But now Topanga's building back. I think they're back to over a million dollars at one store--4,800 square feet. A very interesting story comes as an aftermath. Of course, he was very pleased, and I was very pleased. And then we were sold, of course, on shopping centers. I had occasion to speak to him about some mechanical thing--which was not in his department, but the department which was supposed to take care of it wasn't taking care of it.

And I couldn't get any action, so I called him. I explained to him what it was. He said, "I'll take care of it for you." And I said, "Are you opening any more shopping centers?" So he said, "You see, now you're wanting to go into shopping centers." "Well," I said, "Why not? We found out it's a good business. We thank you for breaking our head to try to get us in there." So he said, "Well, there are all kinds of shopping centers. You can get very hurt." He said, "Maybe we ought to have lunch together." I said, "Okay, come down, we'll go to Musso's for lunch." So during the lunch we talked about a lot of things. And he said to me, "You know, you had me over a barrel." I said, "Is that so?" He said, "Louis Epstein had the May Company and Warner Brothers"--you know that shopping center is owned by the two of them, May Company and Warner Brothers. I said, "Louis Epstein had the May Company and Warner Brothers over a barrel? I'd like to hear about this." He said, "Yes." He said, "I was determined to have a bookstore in that center. I felt a bookstore was for the good of the mix of the tenants. But," he said, "there's only one bookstore that I would have." He said, "You have no idea how many bookstores I've turned down. I've turned down a chain from Minneapolis"--which was Dayton, Dalton--"and local dealers." He said, "I've turned down twelve or more booksellers that wanted to come in. But there's only one that I wanted. And that was your store,

because I knew your merchandise, I know your store, I've been a customer there for years." He said, "For that location, all the other people on the committee who were working on the center to help rent it--we never give a location like that to a local dealer. We give it to some chain that follows us all over the country." May Company has a lot of shopping centers all over the country." He said, "I took a beating--you have no idea--by putting you in there." I said, "Is anybody unhappy about it now?" He said, "No. Nobody's unhappy. We are not unhappy. But we have a lot of unhappy people in the chains that said, 'How come you gave that location to a small merchant instead of giving it to us? We follow you all over. Where's he going to help you?" "Well," I said, "We may go with you." And since then, we've been into four of their centers.

But that was how the first Pickwick expansion came about. Of course, Aaron was involved in all the negotiations, and so forth. And then we opened at San Bernardino; we opened in Bakersfield; we opened Carlsbad; we opened San Diego. San Diego is another deal that Bob Getz insisted that I take.

GARDNER: Where in San Diego is it?

EPSTEIN: Mission Valley Center. He had a Ford [Automobile] salesroom in the center, and it doesn't belong in a center. So he was waiting for them to give up their location. They negotiated them out of there. He called me up and he said,

"Louis, move right in." And we got to the point that we didn't even have to talk terms. He knew exactly what he wanted to charge me, and he knew exactly what I wanted to pay, and it was a handshake deal. Somebody drew up the lease, and it always worked out. If anything came up, there was no fighting, no arguments, no threats of lawsuits. We dealt with other people that--oh, just horrible. One man in particular. This man in particular went as far as to cut off a piece of our signature and paste it onto somewhere else. If that's not dirty. . . . And we caught him at it, fortunately. He did that to impress an insurance company that I, personally, was insuring the leases, which was not so. We're incorporated.

So this expansion went on, and the book business generally kept expanding. In spite of the fact that we opened several stores around us in the Valley, we thought we would lose a lot of business by opening in the Valley. I thought we'd lose at least 10, 15 percent of our business. Stackhouse thought so; Aaron thought so. We gained so many customers there, and some of our customers would buy books in both places. But our volume kept growing even in Hollywood, kept right on growing--not quite as fast, but then it started perking up again. And then the Valley just kept growing and growing and growing.

GARDNER: What was your competition in the Valley at that time? There really weren't any major bookstores,

were there?

EPSTEIN: No, there were no major bookstores, but there were several small ones. I don't even remember now who they were. There was Lewis, but Lewis wasn't competition. Lewis is still operating, but he had a different type of business entirely. He sells teacher's books and teaching aids and things of that nature. But there were several little bookstores. They survived. And since then a number of others have opened up and are doing fairly well. A personal bookshop can compete with a large chain anytime--if they're properly financed to begin with. Where the personal small bookshops opening break down is in under-financing. They invest in their original stock, and they have to wait so much time to get some of it back that they have a hard time keeping up with it. And they have to build up their inventory, especially on a rising market of prices.

So from there on, we just kept branching out till Dayton-Hudson came in and asked to buy us out.

GARDNER: How many stores did you have at the time that Dayton-Hudson first approached you?

EPSTEIN: We had seven operating and three on the boards.

GARDNER: Were they the first chain to contact you about purchase?

EPSTEIN: Yes.

GARDNER: And at that point, there was not yet the trend, was there?

EPSTEIN: Not quite, no. No. There were several people that had two or three or four stores. Lew Lengfeld had a number of stores out here. He has Hunter's, you know. And the Hoyt people--Walden--they had a few stores. They had quite a number of stores scattered around, but they hadn't come into this market yet. You know, the Walden is now owned by Broadway.

GARDNER: Weren't they originally in Arizona, or something like that?

EPSTEIN: No, originally they were from New England, and then they hit a lot of college towns in the East. They were branching out, but their business started in a different way. They had a lot of department-store concessions. They had, oh, I don't know, 100 or more of those--150. But they're usually very small. Then they started opening up stores. And then, I guess, the Broadway, seeing what happened to us, decided they better get into that business. So they bought the Walden chain.

GARDNER: Of course, Broadway's gone through tremendous expansion, too. It's now tied up with Hale.

EPSTEIN: Yes. Now the whole name is changed. The corporate name is Carter-Hawley.

While we were concluding our deal with Dayton-Hudson, Bob Getz and I were talking about something. "Louis, is it too late to talk to you about selling your store?" He

said, "It's supposed to be a secret. I happen to know that you've got a deal going." "Well," I said, "I would hate to disturb it now." "Well," he said, "I can understand that." But I don't know, maybe I should have disturbed it, because I think I would rather be connected up with the May Company group than the others. Not that they haven't treated me fairly, but I think May Company might have created a different type of chain, much sooner. Now, they combine the Pickwick stores with the Dalton stores. It's a separate corporation called Dayton-Hudson Booksellers. The Pickwick name does not go any further north than Fresno. All the stores in the West, in my opinion, should have been Pickwick stores because the name is so well known out West. But no, they decided they wanted the Dalton name. Now they're talking of eliminating the Pickwick name altogether.

GARDNER: Is that so?

EPSTEIN: Well, over a period of time, because they want to do national advertising.*

* The Pickwick name is definitely being phased out. The Mr. Pickwick logo has been dropped from all use, and all the ads are now B. Dalton, with Pickwick below. Soon Pickwick will be in smaller type and a little later not mentioned at all. All the new stores in this area have their signs as B. Dalton with a tiny line Pickwick. So save all your old Pickwick bookmarks. In a hundred years they will be collector's items.--[L.E.]

TAPE NUMBER: XIII, SIDE TWO

AUGUST 13, 1974

GARDNER: The next item is the one we just left off on the other side, and that's the moment that Dayton-Hudson approached you with interest in buying Pickwick. Was that the first time that anyone had approached you with something like that?

EPSTEIN: Yes. That was the first time anybody approached us to buy. Oh, over the years, every once in a while, I'd get discouraged, and I'd say, "Well, I'm going to sell out." One time, Walter Martindale thought of buying us. Another time a group of actors and writers were going to buy us out. One of their agents came around to see us, and we progressed quite a bit toward negotiations. They offered a good round sum of money for that time--the business, of course, later became worth much more than that--and we actually started negotiations. And then they began to nibble away on their offer, and we dropped that. I mean, there never was any real necessity for me to sell, but every once in a while I'd get discouraged about something or other, or tired, or the whole situation would be overwhelming. But it would always pass off, and I'd get back to my normal again, so we'd discuss things.

The period of which I'm talking about now, we already had seven stores going and three on the drawing board. And

it was getting quite a problem for us. We were expanding very rapidly. We had not yet used any outside capital, but we could see in the very near future, if we kept expanding, we would have to. And I always dreaded that. I always dreaded having to go to the bank. We never borrowed money from a bank at any time we were in business. Even when we expanded our real-estate area, we had enough cash money to make a down payment. [tape stopped] As I say, we could see finance problems coming ahead. Not that we couldn't handle them--we had ample assets on which to borrow, but borrowing didn't ever appeal to me, as I said. And to be absolutely honest about the whole matter, I was never cut out to be a top-notch executive; I am the kind of an operator who always liked to do things himself, or have his finger in everything. And I could see problems for myself and problems in organization that we were not familiar with--which might turn out to be very difficult to handle. And then our ambitions were never that very, very great. The assets of the corporation had grown to a very, very sizable sum of money, dollars, in value.

Well, just about that time, we had a visitor come from Dayton-Hudson--their manager of their whole chain [Dick Hagen]. They had the Dalton chain, which they had started a year before out of Minneapolis, and they had about four or five stores at the time. And they were trying to get leases in this area. We knew that they were trying to find leases in

this area, and some of the developers told them, "Well, what do we need you for? We've got a good operator in Southern California that does excellent volume, brings us good rents, pays his bills on time, gives us no problems. Why should we give you space?" And they were turned away from a couple of shopping centers with just that type of talk. So I suppose they did the next best thing they could do: they came to look to see what it was, probably with the idea, well, "If you can't beat them, join them"--that type of philosophy. Which is strictly all right. So this chap came in one day. He introduced himself, and he wanted to know if he could look around. I said, "I'd be happy to have you look around." I mean, any visiting bookman, I was very proud to show him around--a little bit of boastfulness in my nature. I showed him around, and [he was] very, very impressed. He asked if I would tell him the volume. I said, "We have no secrets. We do x number of dollars in this store, x number of dollars in that store." And he went away quite impressed. The following week I got a thank-you note from him, and the following week I got a letter that the vice-president of the company, one of the Dayton brothers [Kenneth], was coming out here. And he had been told about the store; he would like to see it. So I said, "Fine. Send him out. Have him drop in. I'd be glad to have him drop in." So I showed him around. He was very nice, very impressed. He thanked me. A few days later

I got a nice formal thank-you note from him, a very formally polite and--company manners, you might say. And by the time he left--and from the kinds of questions that he asked me, the kinds of things that he wanted to discuss--I got an impression that maybe it might be just more than sight-seeing. The impression was confirmed a week later when they said that the other brother [Bruce Dayton], the president of the company, would like to come out and see it. So, obviously, we told him he could, and said we'd be very happy. So he came out. We showed him around, and he, of course, asked kind of other questions.

GARDNER: And they still hadn't said anything to you?

EPSTEIN: No, no. But by the time the second brother came around--the president--I knew that it was more than just curiosity to see. He knew by that time that I probably understood that. I showed him around, then we went to lunch. When we came back from lunch, he said, "Well, Louis, you must be guessing pretty well what might be in our minds." I said, "Yes. I didn't at first, but by the time I was through talking with Bruce I gathered there might be some interest other than just viewing." He said, "Well, to be very honest with you, we've tried to find out as much as we could about the Pickwick, and we could hear nothing but the nicest things in the world. We talked to publishers in New York, and they said you have A-1 credit, you're a great guy, you're probably the best bookman in the world."

I tell you, he started building me up to the sky. I said, "Well, it's hard to live up to the reputation you're bringing me." And so he said, "Would you be interested?" "Well," I said, "I'm a businessman; I'll listen." So from there on. . . . He said, "Well, we'd like to send some people out here to compare books and try to find some evaluation." And then from there on, it progressed by meetings between their representatives and our accountant, their accountant. And we got together and thrashed out a deal. And they bought it.

GARDNER: What was the deal? Or is that. . . ?

EPSTEIN: Well, I don't think I should mention exactly, but it was satisfactory to us. The figures were satisfactory. And what happened afterward, good or bad, is not their fault. We took a lot of stock and the stock went way down, as all stocks have. Maybe theirs probably went down a little more than most, because they started that expansion program. See, Dayton-Hudson was only in Minneapolis. They were <u>the</u> main department-store chain in the Minneapolis area. And even there they had only the main store and, I think, two branches. And then they bought Hudson's of Detroit, and that was a great drag. It was at one time one of the finest stores in the country, one of the biggest--probably <u>the</u> biggest. And their bigness is now a detriment because they have this tremendous building in downtown Detroit and downtown

Detroit is probably no better than downtown Los Angeles. Business no longer goes there--a certain type of business. But they've made a turnaround there. But they've expanded in the outside areas, and they're doing as well as other department stores are doing.

But because of the tremendous costs they run into, they used up a lot of money. I don't want to criticize the top operation of Dayton-Hudson, but I know in the book area, they were very slow in moving it in the right direction. Had they left it to, say, Stackhouse, Aaron, Elliot, or myself, they would have started making the money they're making now three years sooner, four years sooner. But no, in spite of the fact that they built me up as the wisest man in the book business, they never got around to making their stores like the Pickwick stores till just about two and a half years ago. Now they have these running ladders, books from floor to ceiling, major large stocks. The original plan, the Dalton plan, was to have a minimum of stock. And I'm not telling any secrets, and I don't tell this in any derogatory sense except to compare experience with nonexperience. When they started a chain of bookstores, they hired no one, not one single person who had ever been connected in any way with the book business--retail books, wholesale books, publishing, libraries, nothing. They took a man out of their lingerie and hosiery department and told him to start a chain

of bookstores. And he spent a year going around Europe and everywhere. He came back with the idea, sat down with an architect, and they built almost museum type of things with a minimum of stock. My first sight of one of those stores was in Minneapolis at Southdale shopping center, which they own. And they took me there to show me, when we first went to Minneapolis. Aaron was with me. I was taken to the store, and the manager of all the stores [Dick Hagen] then showed me around--back and forth, basement and everything. They had 7,200 square feet of space. Now, to a person who doesn't know the book business, or merchandising, or almost any other type of business--you don't take 7,200 square feet of space to do a minimum of business. If you take space, you take it with the idea of filling it with merchandise, salable merchandise, and doing the maximum possible of business. So they had this 7,200 square feet of space, and I could see at a glance that the stock was nowhere near adequate. The shelves were poorly laid out. The store was totally impossible to run as a quick merchandising business. They had an $800 desk for you to sit down and look at your book at with a chair right towards the middle of the front of the store. And at the entrance to the store they had a $1,200 globe. Now, how many $1,200 globes are sold in the United States in a year? Maybe some large corporation will buy one for their offices, but just for that one--and in the store right at the entrance.

Instead of leaving all their front with the most possible glass, they purposely closed off the glass on one-third of their front--to sell books, which need utmost exposure, they cut off one-third. As I said before, this man had an idea of making their stores look like fine drawing rooms. Well, people who come to shopping centers are not that kind of buyers. It would be forbidding to Mrs. Jones walking by, shopping for kids' shoes, to even look into a store like that. She would never come in; she'd be afraid. Well, anyway, on the way out of that store, the man said he has only $65,000 worth of stock in there. That proved what I had been thinking. And he said, "We hope to reach $300,000 this year." And there he had 7,200 square feet. After we walked out of that store, he was telling me this, so I said, you give me that store, and I'll give you $600,000 in one year." Well, after I said it, I realized that I was embarrassing him in front of his boss, so I tried to back away from that statement. "Well," I said, "There I go again, boasting," or something like that. Ken Dayton said, "Wait a minute, Louie. You said that. Do you really think so?" "Well," I said, "If you're making a direct question of it, yes, I do." I said, "You'll have to change the pace of the store. You'll have to put some merchandise in." I said, "How do you expect to do more than $300,000 if you have only $65,000 worth of merchandise?" I said, "You're a merchant. How many turns can you expect out of it?" I

said, "You're going to find that you're going to get fewer turns than you expected." They were expecting five and a half turns a year. You can't do that in the book business. Maybe in New York, where you've got a fine wholesaler right in your backyard, but even there you'd have a very difficult time.

At any rate, we talked about that, and I told him. I said, "Look. Your shelves are poor." And I told him exactly what I thought was wrong. And do you know, they didn't do a damn thing about it until a number of years later when this chap left and all that. So, as I say, bigness doesn't necessarily even mean creativeness. Maybe in one area they'll be very creative, and in another area they will take an area which they're totally unfamiliar, and put in people who are totally unfamiliar instead of seeking out somebody who is familiar and have him help set a policy. And I told that to the Dayton brothers one time. I said, "How in the world can you lay out x number of million dollars, give it to a guy--to spend any way he wants--who has never in his life had a thing to do with a book?"

GARDNER: What was their response?

EPSTEIN: Well, he admitted he made a mistake. But he said, "Well, to us, it's merchandising." "Well," I said, "even if it's merchandising, and suppose you realize that after a year's time, the man is not making progress and you're losing all that money?" He said, "We're accustomed to losing money when we're

planning an operation." "But there was no necessity for you to lose money," I said. "You sat there and you told me what a great bookman I was and how I could help your organization. And here I was sitting in Los Angeles waiting for the phone to ring. And it never rang." I said, "There was no reason for you to do that. You had me, you had Aaron, you had Stackhouse, and you had Elliot Leonard--all with proven records--and any one of us would have been very happy to come and sit down and help guide you people. But you persist in losing a million, $2 million, $3 million year after year."

But that's the way a corporation works. I mean, to me, it's an anomaly. They're smart businessmen--the Dayton brothers are no fools. But this was the smallest portion of their business, and they probably neglected to even give the proper thought behind it. But they have vice-presidents who are supposed to take care of the other portions of the business. But I can't explain it. That's big business for you.

GARDNER: If it's the smallest portion, why were they so interested in getting into bookshops in the first place?

EPSTEIN: Well, they hoped to make it a national chain, and they're progressing toward that. This year, they'll do well over $100,000,000 of books.

GARDNER: That's a good reason.

EPSTEIN: No, wait a minute. Am I right? No, I think I'm wrong. I think it's probably closer to $60 or $70 million.
GARDNER: Tell me, did you undergo a great deal of soul-searching before you sold?
EPSTEIN: Oh, it was one of the hardest things we had to do. The business was so personal to so many people--to my wife, to my children, to myself, to my entire family. And to the community. Really. The Pickwick in Hollywood is the most personal business you can think of. Of course, we would tell as few people as possible about it--my attorney, my accountant. And there was not unanimity of mind. To be honest with you, I had to force the sale, and I did force it. And I'm not positive that I made the wise decision. I'm still not positive. I'm positive in one area--physically. I was sixty-six years old at the time. I was at nerve's edge, constantly. I couldn't hold my food many evenings a week, simply because of nervousness. My doctor kept after me. He said, "Louis, you're a very fortunate man, that you have a good heart." He said, "If your heart showed any symptoms of going astray or becoming irregular, I would have ordered you to quit years ago. But you can't drive yourself. Your nervous system will eventually affect your heart. Cut down, cut down." I have tremors in my hands--which I've had for a long time, but they were becoming worse. And this opportunity came along, and I said to myself, I said to my wife,

I said to Aaron, "Look, what are we seeking?" What was our aim? How much money did we aim to make?" Well, Aaron, for obvious reasons, was very personally attached to this business, but he too was becoming nervous--at his age. I said, "Andy, you're becoming as nervous as I am, at your age. And it's only one thing that's doing it--the business. What's the worth of it?" I said, "If I step out of there, you run it by yourself. You'll have the problems you have plus all the problems that I carried. Then you will really have problems. What do we need it for?" I'm the guy really responsible. I'm positive that if it had come to Aaron--Aaron definitely did not want to sell. Of course, Eugene had no special interest in the business other than that he had a little financial stake in it, so he kept neutral. And Ann--she tried to keep neutral. She wanted Aaron to be happy about it; she definitely wanted me out. She knew that I couldn't carry on the way I was, and she knew also that if I maintained a five-cent interest in the business, I would be there every day, because that's the way I am, and that's the way I am about the book business still. For good or ill, I am responsible for the decision. I think it was for the good--if and when the stock market improves, it will be.*

GARDNER: For very good. [laughter]

---

* 11/75. The stock has come back considerably and will continue to go up.--[L.E.]

EPSTEIN: But we weren't sophisticated enough in knowing when to sell. The stock went way up, and now it went way down. But we manage to eat.

GARDNER: Now how about regrets? Any regrets? And in this I also include things like seeing what's happened with the Pickwick since you left.

EPSTEIN: To use the word "regrets" in its full term, I would have to say no. There are some regrets. In total, there are no regrets. I am not sorry I sold the business. I'm sorry that we didn't sell the stock soon enough. But on the other hand, if we had sold the stock, we'd have probably taken that money and put it into something else that would have gone down. So you have to be philosophic about that, too. As far as regretting what happened to the stores, yes. I'm sorry to see that they've become so totally impersonal. I'm sorry to see that they're being run and bought for from Minneapolis. I'm sorry to see that the service in the stores has become that slow and that unhappy. I mean, there are no happy people there. That's a problem. The people working there are not happy.

GARDNER: Why?

EPSTEIN: Well, because they are not doing creative work. All the creative work, if you can call it that--the buying, the policy setting, the merchandise mix--is being done 2,000 miles away in Minneapolis.

GARDNER: By computer.

EPSTEIN: And a lot of it is done by computer. So you have a lot of people who might be bookmen--if they were given an opportunity to be creative in the book business--who are not being helped to become bookmen. As a matter of fact, they're being hindered to become bookmen. And the opportunities for them to grow in the bookish area--they can grow in the management area if they're good, but even the management of the stores is not bookish.

GARDNER: Do you think this is a trend in the book trade?

EPSTEIN: It definitely is a trend at the present. Now, what is happening [is] (and this is strictly off the top of the head--it's my personal philosophy, my personal thinking, the way I see it; I may be 100 percent wrong) the trend is definitely for chains. And the trend is definitely for ordering by computer, because you start a chain, and you've got twenty-five stores. That's another area which was beginning to bother us. The detail was becoming so great before we sold out. The detail was becoming so great and so confusing that we could see in the distance--right now, we need some kind of computer help. And if it's anything I don't know, it's the computer. And from what I saw the computer did for some of the publishers during our time, I didn't want any part of it. So there that was in the offing, too.

But to get back to your exact question. The trend definitely is towards that. How long it will continue, I

don't know. There are certain things happening that may make the business less attractive to the chains that are operating now. Number one, the rents they have to pay are becoming fantastically high in shopping centers. One of the reasons they're becoming fantastically high is because there are three or four chains competing for the same space. So the landlord just sits back there waiting for the one who'll offer him the most money. And it was illustrated to me by Mr. Getz, whom we spoke about earlier. There was one store in Eagle Rock. Now Eagle Rock is no great shakes for a shopping center. It's not a big center. But we wanted to go in there. And then Walden wanted to go in there, and then another chain wanted to go in there. We thought we had a deal going, so we called up there. I said, "Well, how about a deal with you?" He said, "I don't think you've got a store. I don't think we can give you a store." I said, "Why not?" He said, "You're not willing to pay enough money." I said, "We offered you more than we ever paid you at any other place." "Yes, but," he said, "we've got two people offering us more." So I said to Bob, "Look, we can do the best job, selling books." "Oh, he said, "they can't hold a candle to you." "Well, then, why don't you give us the store?" He said, "Louie, I work for the May Company. And the May Company's object is to make money. And they love to collect high rents. What would you do if you sat here and you had three people throwing more and more money at you? Which would you take?" He said,

"That's exactly what we're doing. These people are just throwing money at us, they want to get in here so bad. We all know you do a better job. But the insurance company who loans us the money, they want to get the biggest rent schedule they can on their books." So we didn't get that.

But the rents are tremendously high. Now, shopping centers are beginning to compete against themselves. There are more shopping centers being opened in every area, so they begin to compete with themselves. The labor situation is becoming highly competitive. And one other thing which I see in the offing is a discount schedule for books. The present discount schedule is very much in favor of large buyers, and the chains are getting something they're not entitled to. I know what it is, but I do not want to discuss it because it's a dangerous subject. It may involve [Federal] Trade Commission action between the large stores and the small stores. And I'm afraid that the chain stores are going to be hit in the way of paying for services that they're presently getting and not paying for. And the discount relationship may have to be ironed out. And if they do, it will cost them a lot of money, cost them a lot of money. When they started opening stores in the hundreds--like Walden and Dalton, into the hundreds--they began to exercise a great deal of power over some publishers. And they're beginning to meet some resistance with the large publishers. I can see a clash in the relatively near future.

It's got to come, because the publishers can't keep on giving them what they're giving them. They can't do it legally, and whether they will want to do it illegally. . . . And they're pressing. Well, let's face it, you know that the bigger a customer becomes--the same way in every line--the more they'll press for better discounts or for more advertising allowances. So there's a big head-on collision coming which may cost the chains a large amount of money in operating expenses.

There is room, however, for a good independent bookstore in almost any community, which can still give--who will give--personal service, personal attention, and be willing to exercise some authority over his business. He doesn't have to wire or call Minneapolis, or whatever the city, to find out if he can do something out of the usual. There will always be room for that. I was discussing that with the present president of the ABA when we visited him two weeks ago at Colorado Springs. It's one of the things that we talked about at lunchtime. He asked me whether I thought that he would have to chain up. I said I thought he would, at least in his own area, because if he didn't, there would be several chains coming in and they might surround him and hurt him. Even in a comparatively small area like Colorado Springs--shopping centers are springing up all over. "And they may hurt your business. So if an opportunity does come up, and you can chain up in your own area without

getting too far afield, it's my opinion you should." With one or two stores, he can still control it very nicely. It's when he gets up in the fifteens and twenties, then he has to have management. And he would have to manage the management rather than the stores. My big problem was I know the book business but I don't know management. We got along very well with the management we had when we had the number of stores that we had. The trend is definitely, to answer the question again, toward further chaining up. It will eventually reach its peak, and it may not be as profitable as it was with fewer stores.

GARDNER: Is the trend, then, also out of the hands of the bookmen? You've been sort of hinting at that without really saying it.

EPSTEIN: There aren't that many bookmen. You see, the trouble with the chains is [that] they train managers but they don't train bookmen. So where are they going to get the bookmen? You see, right now, Dayton-Hudson, the only bookmen they have, trained bookmen, are the people they took out of Pickwick. Their major buyers are Pickwick people--all trained at the Pickwick. They took Joni Miller, Alan Kahn, Brian Baxter; Geof Rogart just left to go there. I think two other people left; I can't think of their names at the moment--people whom I had not trained. Joni, Alan, and Brian were all people that worked under me. They worked under Elliot; they knew our system; they knew our

system of buying. Alan worked for us since he was fourteen years old. And he started, oh, handing out those little bookmarks at the door, that we used to. The purpose was to watch people as they walked out. And then he worked weekends, and then he went to college. He worked summers. And finally, when he was graduating from college, about a year or so before, we sat down. He asked me, "Do I have a future in the book business?" So I pointed to Elliot; I pointed to Stackhouse; I pointed to Aaron. I said, "Well, these guys made a future in the book business. You can if you want to." And I told him what it takes to want to. You've got to work hard, and you've got to learn as much as possible about your business, and just take hold of an area and do a good job. It's that simple. It takes stick-to-itiveness. He said, "Okay." And by God, he did, and turned out to be an excellent man. He's a good buyer, good buyer. He's young; he's loud. But basically, he's a good guy, in the sense that he's an ethical person. He's a good person, but he gets overexcited sometimes and makes noise. Sometimes he uses a few too [many] expletives. But he's right in the generation of expletives. He's in that exact generation that uses that foul language. But fortunately he stayed with something constructive instead of destructive. The language--he adopted that.

So where are they going to get bookmen? Who is training them? We're not training any bookmen here now anymore.

They don't need them. All they need is people who manage the store, hire and fire, see that the cash register totals up; and all the buying and thinking is done in Minneapolis. And every other chain has the same problem. That's one of the things that worries me about the book trade: so many of the stores, by the nature of their operation, have to become, instead of major collections of books, smaller collections of books, of best sellers, which will necessitate the publisher to try to create best sellers, in this sense: that they will have to spend a lot more money on promotion with the chains. The tendency will be to more emphasis on the sale of best sellers and a diminishing emphasis on the lesser books, which may be far better literary works--usually are because the general average, in the United States (or any country; I'm not downgrading the United States) is not literature per se but a story, an adventure, be it fiction or nonfiction. But when you get down to literature, it has to be for the well-educated person and those few people who appreciate fine literature. It applies to fine music as well, or fine merchandise, or fine art. It's relatively the same. The popular is not necessarily the best--in art, in music, or anything. So they're dropping the fine; they're dropping the better because it doesn't move fast. And the tendency will be to shorten the list of titles, the same way that, say, Dalton had before the Pickwick policy went in. Of fifty titles that we handled,

maybe they would have five out of the fifty. Why? Because they didn't sell too fast. We would handle a title if it sold even one a year. I felt it was my duty. They have no such duty. They have a duty only to turnover. And with all that turnover, their profits are not superior or even close to what we had with a lesser turnover. That is in general to talk about the question of what is going to happen. But there is an opportunity for an individual store to come in, an individual operator, and gradually build up a business. He has to work like hell; he has to do the same thing that I and some others did when we built our businesses. It can be done.

GARDNER: Well, what about your own future?

EPSTEIN: Well, my future is governed by numbers, and the numbers are the number of years in one's life. I'm presently approaching seventy-three. I'm not planning to do anything much different from what I'm doing right now. Fortunately I keep busy with a lot of things I'm still interested in.

GARDNER: I.e., buying books.

EPSTEIN: Well, I buy books if I buy them cheap enough. [laughter] I've sort of come back to a love that I've really never lost: it's the old-book business, and I like to visit old-book stores and see what I can find. I visit junk shops, as you know. I boast about buying a book for a dime and selling it for five dollars sometimes, most of

the time just putting it on my shelf and forgetting about it, thinking it's worth a lot.

Let's face it, approaching seventy-three, you can't plan too far ahead; but on the other hand, I'm not planning just to sit down and sit, either. As long as God gives me strength and ability to keep my mind going, I intend to just get around as much as possible. As you know, I work with the [L.A.] Library Association. We're planning an auction for sometime next February or March at the [Sotheby] Parke Bernet galleries. We've got to find 200 people who will each give us a book or some art object worth approximately $100. We're hoping to raise $20,000. The Los Angeles Library Association's running a book sale on the lot at the library again, like they've done for the last two years. We've been working on that. Oh, there are any number of people who call me for this, that, or the other. And I don't need as much activity as I used to. I still read book catalogs, books about books. I meet bookmen. I'm very happy to say that they're all glad to see me. Really. And we discuss a lot. One of the most gratifying things, I think, about the whole business of being where I am today from the route I came through is the fact that along the way I met so many people, made so many friends, who are still my friends and who are always happy to see me. I'm happy to see them. They've always got a question for me to answer. "What would you do with this? What would you

do with that?" And I give them whatever advice I can, for whatever it's worth. And amazingly some of it, they take and they use. And if I see them doing something wrong--which I think they could do better, let's put it that way--I suggest it and very often they pursue it. There's that thing called respect which I think I have from them. In spite of the fact they were all theoretically my competitors, there was never that spirit of antagonistic competition between myself and any of the others. I think Mr. Campbell will probably tell you that; I think Walter will tell you that. I think even Lew Lengfeld, who is the most difficult person in the book business to get along with--he and competitors don't normally get along, but he made an exception with me. He told me one day. He came to my farewell dinner, retirement dinner. He said, "Louis, you know, you're the only guy I would ever go to a dinner like this for." I said, "Lew, I'm very complimented." I knew what he was talking about. He admits that he doesn't want too much to do with other booksellers--which is his privilege. I'm happy to have enjoyed that contact with booksellers--in the old-book trade, the new-book trade. Occasionally I'll meet a person in the bookstore, and my name will come up--somebody will mention my name. And somebody will say, "Oh, I've heard about you for years. I'm so happy to meet you." They've been in the trade, but they're younger in the trade. They'll say, "I've

been hearing about you for years." Well, that's not bad to hear, really. I always say, "Well, I hope some of it was good." He says, "Oh, my, you're supposed to be the kingpin." Well, true or not, it's not too bad to hear.

In closing, I have a lot to be thankful for, a lot I'm gratified about: the librarians, the booksellers, the publishers, the book readers, the book customers. Writers from all over the world have been through my bookstore. They commended me; they found things there that they hadn't found anywhere else. New Yorkers, who are the hardest people to please when they come to California, express amazement and surprise to find a bookstore of the quality of the Pickwick here, later admitting that there was no such thing, no store of that kind in New York that had the kind of stock we had. Authors thanking me for allowing them to browse because the books were their only friends. Like Elia Kazan telling me publicly, in front of a group of people, that I personally didn't know how much that bookstore (not necessarily me--me, too, he said, because I spoke to him, I was friendly to him) helped tide him over one of the worst periods in his life. He says he didn't know what he would have done if there was no Pickwick to go to every night, go up there and go through the stacks in the old books, picking up a book and reading it. He said he would have gone mad, or committed suicide, or something. That

strong, is the way he expressed it. Finding books they'd been looking for for people, helping them solve their problems. I've great things to look back on.

INDEX

A

AAA Bookstore 445
A-1 Bookshop 234
Abbey Book Shop 224-225, 230, 261, 420-421, 461, 482, 486
Abell, A.N. 70-71, 72
Abraham and Straus, Brooklyn 345, 376
Abrams, Harry N., Inc. 545
Abramson, Ben 259
Acadia Book Shop 57-70, 79-80, 98, 101-103, 105, 124, 131-132, 145-149, 155, 157, 159, 179, 199, 218, 452, 552
Acres of Books 446-448
Adams, John Jay 39, 42
Adco Sports Book Exchange 428-429
Agfa film agency 275
Albert, Eddie 493
Albert, Margo 493
American Antiquarian Booksellers Association 477, 505-509, 511-512, 569-570
Southern California Chapter 463, 469, 477-502, 503-513, 514-524, 561, 563, 569-570
American Book Prices Current 507
American Booksellers Association 19, 411, 569-570, 573-592, 627
American Civil Liberties Union 352
American Retailers Association 48
Ames family 71-72
Andrews, Mr. _____ 117
Andrews, Ted 117
Antiquarian Bookman (periodical) 199
Archer, H. Richard 103, 240-241
Arco Publishing Company 211-213, 549
Argonaut Book Shop 74, 105, 135, 158, 179, 186-188, 191-194, 201, 218-219, 224, 231, 298, 487
Argosy Bookshop 410
Argus Bookshop 259

Arrowhead Drinking Water 460-461
Association of College Bookstores 585
August, Cornelia Duchon 8

B

Babcock, Arthur 554
Bachman, J.G. 301
Bachman, Lawrence 301
Baker, Ellis 538
Bancroft Junior High School, Hollywood 273
Bank of America 295
Barbierri and Price Book Store 231-232, 234
Barr, Geoffrey 559
Bass, Marie L. 229
Bassett, F.N. 500
Baxter, Brian 628
B. Dalton, Bookseller 605, 608-624, 626, 628, 629-631
Southdale Shopping Center store, Minneapolis 617-619
Bechtold, Eugene 418-419, 428-429, 459, 480
Bein, Barbara 274
Bekins Storage 84, 157
Bellows, George 260-261
Beneficial Life Insurance Company 283
Bennett and Marshall 383-384, 400-401, 487
Bennett, Robert 103-104, 124, 382-384, 400-401
Berg Metals 77
Berman, Gideon 225, 421, 461
Berman, Joe 371-374
Beverly Hills Book and Record Shop 394-395
Beverly Hills Hotel 305
Beverly Hills Public Library 91-95, 109
Biola (Bible Institute of Los Angeles) 57, 58, 67, 101, 117 147, 162
Book Room 117, 154
Black, B., and Sons 294
Blake, James D. 526-529, 531, 534
Blatt, Bertha G. 264, 403, 408
Blatt, Lucille 403, 408
Bloch, Martin 457
Blum, Burt 448-449, 513
Blum, Gene 448-449, 513
Blum, Harry 448, 513

Blum, Jack 448-449, 513-514, 515
B'Nai B'Rith 339
Anti-Defamation League 358-359
B'Nai B'Rith Messenger (newspaper) 76
Bobbs-Merrill Co., Inc. 558
Bodkin, John J. 241
Bohn Library 354
Bookazine 409-410, 448, 457
Book Center, The 433, 457-460
Bookman's Shop 395-396
Books in Print 119-120
Books in Review bookstore 427-428
Bookseller, The 225
Book Treasury, The 520
Borden, Manny 234, 236-238, 488
Borden, Sarah 234-235, 236-238, 488
Borzon Books 457
Boulevard Book and Art Shop 427
Boutell, Roger 87-89
Boynton, Mary 91-93, 94-95, 97
Bradbury, Ray 335
"How to Spend an Evening in Los Angeles" 335
Bradley, Tom 366
Bramble, Dave 560
Branch, C.U. 433-437
Braun, Mr. _____ 266
Braun and Reinhold Bookroom 266
Brecht, Bertolt 324-325
Breed Street Shul (Congregation Talmud Torah), Boyle Heights 24, 40-41, 76, 278
Brentano's Inc. 237, 395, 410-411, 422-426, 437, 457 561, 590
Brier, Samuel 478-480
Broadway Department Stores 155, 156, 609
Brown's Book Shop 501, 402, 572
Brown Derby Restaurant, Hollywood 433
Brown, Helen 225, 483-484
Brown, Herbert F. 401, 402
Brown, Jack 427-428
Brown, Phil 225, 230, 482-484, 502
Brush, Albert 316
Bullock's Department Stores 64, 155, 156, 202-203, 260, 345
Burbank Public Library 94-97, 133-134

Burch, John Q. 153, 429, 445-446, 487
Burke, Ben 542

C

Caler publications 524
Callman, Ernest 559
California Book Company 115-116, 140, 457
California Institute of Technology 272
Cambridge Bookshop 437, 442, 491-492
Cambridge University Press 533
Campbell, Bob 114-115, 210, 230, 340, 341, 549, 563, 571, 573, 589, 633
Campbell's Book Store 114-115, 140, 210-211
Canterbury Book Shop 442
Carmack, Jess 536-538, 541
Carroll, Joe 560
Carter Hawley Hale Stores, Inc. 609
Case, Frances 562-563, 566, 572
Case, Jack 402, 562-563, 566, 572
Case School, Cleveland 23
Case Western Reserve University 23, 34
Casey, Clark 514
Castle, A.D. 55, 229
"Cavalcade of Books" (TV program) 402, 562-566, 572
Cedars of Lebanon Hospital
see Cedars-Sinai Medical Center
Cedars-Sinai Medical Center 44, 76, 598
Chadwick, Isaac E. 154
Chaffee, Bill 558-559
Chandler, Raymond 336
Chapin, Herb 559, 560
Chaplin, Charlie 302, 308-309
Chaplin, Oona O'Neill 309
Charney, King 275
Chase, Denny 541-542
Chase, Mrs. Denny 541
Cherokee Book Shop 448-449, 513-514
Chevalier, Joe 411-412, 476
Christian, Peggy 437-438
Chudikoff family 283
City of Hope 76, 196, 276-277, 282
Claremont Book and Art Shop 478-480
Clark, Arthur H. 226, 480-481

Clemens, Samuel (Mark Twain) 108, 156
Tom Sawyer 108
Clemente, Nick 596
Cleveland, June 156
Cleveland Plain Dealer (newspaper) 20
Coca-Cola of Los Angeles 460-461
Cohen, Bob 546-548, 549
Cohn, Kaspare 597-599
Cohn family 77, 597-598
Cole, Barbara (Mrs. John) 485-486
Cole, John 484-486
Cole's Book and Craft Shop 484-486
La Jolla
College Book Company 238
Collier's Encyclopedia 436
Columbia University 454
Communist party, USA 465-468, 470-471, 473-474
Connoisseur Bookshop 154
Corey, George 559
Corsello, Frank 560
Craft, Robert 325
Cramer, Leslie 283
Cramer, Nate 283
Creeley, Bunster 224-225, 261
Crown Publishers, Inc. 394, 553
Curio Book Shop 121-123, 433, 457, 458-459
Curtis, Paul 72

D

Dahlstrom, Fredrick 395-396
Dale, Harry 131, 143, 409-410, 427, 448, 457, 463, 487-488
Dalinsky, Celia 487-488
Dalton, B., Bookseller
see B. Dalton, Bookseller
Davidson, Mr. _____ 262, 263
Dawley, Jack 557
Dawson, Ernest 59, 61, 98, 104, 107, 108, 123-125, 140, 143, 156, 255, 462
Dawson, Glen 61, 107, 462, 504, 511, 518
Dawson, Muir 61, 107, 143, 462, 504

Dawson's Book Shop 51, 58, 59, 61, 69, 98, 104, 114, 123-125, 128, 143, 156, 226, 238, 243, 255, 383, 461-462, 488
Dayton, Bruce 614-615, 619-620
Dayton, Kenneth 613-615, 618-620
Dayton-Hudson Corporation 553, 578, 605, 608-624, 628, 629-631
Deighton, Lillian 406-407
Dellquest, A.W. 153-153a
Democratic party 362, 471-472
De Vorss, Douglas 429-431
De Vorss and Company 430
Dial/Delacorte Press 561
Diamond, Sid 78
Diaz-Garcia, Mr. _____ 427
Dietrich, Marie 305
Dietrich, Marlene 302, 305-307
Dillon, John 262
Dillon, Mrs. John 262
Dillon Bookshop 262
Dir, Mel 559
Dodd, Mead & Co. 537
Dodger Stadium 366-367
Doering, Al 560
Doheny, Mrs. Edward L. 98
Doheny family 114
Don the Beachcomber, Hollywood 174, 308
Doré, Gustave 308
Doubleday and Company, Inc. 346, 351, 397, 426, 525, 542, 543, 545, 560, 561
Dreiser, Theodore 327, 331
Duchon, Morris 58, 207
Duchon, Rose Epstein 3, 8, 12, 27, 29, 181, 220
Duffy, Joe 575-576, 581, 583, 585
Dutton, E.P., & Co., Inc. 411, 535, 561
Dysinger, Marjorie 573

E

East Tech High School, Cleveland 30, 32
Eaton, Lou 555-556
Edmunds, Larry, Cinema and Theatre Book Shop 189, 432-433, 473, 474-475, 492
Edmunds, Mrs. Larry 473

Ehrlich, Cema Epstein 8, 27-28, 89, 98-99, 102, 181
Eisenhower, Dwight D. 249
Elder, Paul, & Company, San Francisco 80, 202
Ellis Island, New York 14, 112
Elstein, Herbert 396
Elstein, Saul 396
Elstein, Steve 396
Embassy Auditorium 429
Encyclopedia Britannica 96
Encyclopedia of Music (Thomson) 537
Epstein, Aaron 17, 110, 133-135, 144, 166, 182, 209, 215, 221, 266, 271-273, 274-275, 276, 278, 310, 313, 322, 328, 357, 369, 547, 549, 556, 565, 594-597, 600-601, 603, 606, 607, 616, 619, 621-622, 629
Epstein, Ann Goldman 18, 46, 73, 78, 83, 89, 100, 110, 111, 133, 164-165, 182, 271-273, 278-279, 295, 309, 415, 456, 485, 555, 561, 572, 573, 588, 593, 621-622
Epstein, Ben 8, 12, 16, 22, 24, 27, 31, 32, 34, 38, 40, 43, 44, 46, 70, 73-74, 183, 186, 187, 188, 192-193, 194-197, 198, 209, 218-221, 224, 298, 384
Epstein, Cema see Ehrlich, Cema Epstein
Epstein, Eugene 221, 272-273, 276, 278, 328, 357, 547, 595, 621, 622
Epstein, Lillian (Mrs. Ben) 34, 195-196
Epstein, Morris 8, 12, 27, 31, 218
Epstein, Moses 10
Epstein, Mrs. Moses 10
Epstein, Reuben 2-3, 7, 8, 13, 16-17, 20-21, 24-26, 27, 30-31, 34-38,

Epstein, Reuben [cont'd] 40-42, 44, 47, 48-50, 80, 111, 135-136, 149, 159, 164, 168-169, 219-222, 271, 278, 296
Epstein, Sprishe Sorkin 3, 7-8, 16, 34-35, 38, 42, 149, 159, 164-165, 181, 219, 271
Epstein, Yetta (Helen) 3, 12, 27, 32, 38, 40, 46, 181, 197
Epstein's Book Shop
see Acadia Book Shop
Long Beach Book Store
Epstein's, Louis, Book Shop, Long Beach 185-186
Epstein's, Louis, Book Shop, Los Angeles 78, 81-86, 90-98, 102-103, 106, 109-112, 115, 121, 124, 155, 158, 159, 163-166, 172a, 182-184, 196, 201, 241, 255, 294, 297, 303, 331-332, 382, 396, 406, 430, 439-440, 544-555, 561
Essex Institute 244
Everybody's Used Book, Music, & Magazine Shop 396

F

Factor, Max 281
Fanny Hill (Cleland) 353, 355, 356
Farrar Rinehart 575
Faulkner, William 330-331
Federated Department Stores 33-34
Feldman, Dan 71
Feuchtwanger, Lion 322, 324
Feuchtwanger, Marta 324
Field, Irwin 283
Figueroa Bookshop 262
Firestein, Max 281
Fiske, Verne 62, 63
Fitzgerald, F. Scott 329-330
Flax, M., Inc. 385, 386
Folio, The, Book Shop 427
Ford Motor Corporation 606
Fowler Brothers, Inc. 51, 62, 114, 116,

Fowler Brothers [cont'd] 140, 153, 157, 341-243, 245-246, 248, 423, 563, 573
Fowler, Ward 241, 242, 243, 245-246, 563
Foy, Eddie 275
Freedman, Louis 531-533, 561
Freeson, Lee 492-497, 513
Freeson, Margo 493-494, 497
Friend, John 61, 124
Friends of the UCLA Library 522
Front, Theodore 520-521

G

Gable, Clark 302
Gallaher, P.W. 481
Gans, Mr. _____ 264
Gans' Book Store 264
Gardiner, Harry 67, 101, 147-148
Gardner Avenue School 273
Garland, W.M. 113
Gaskill, Betty 554-555
Gateway to Music 437
Gertzwey, F. 446
Getz, Ben 597, 599
Getz, Robert E. 597-607, 609-610, 625-626
Gibson, James Patterson 230
Gilbert, Eddie 206, 420
Gilbert, Eddie, Bookstore 206
Gladstone, Milton 212-213
Goha the Fool (Ades and Jasapovicha) 62
Golden Bough Bookstore 261
Goldenberg, Roy 71
Goldfaden, Goodwin 428
Goldstone, Phil 274-275, 281
Goldwater, Pearl 156, 202
Golter, Irma 276
Golter, Rose 276
Golter, Sam 276
Gone with the Wind (film) 302, 406-407
Goodhand, Hazel B. 420
Goodhand, Milton 420
Goodwill Industries 54, 68, 148
Gordon, Mary 419-420
Gordon, Nicholas McDowell ("Mac") 136-137, 153a, 166-168, 206, 433
Gordon, Mrs. Nicholas 206

Gordon, Wilmot 560
Gore, Marian L. 521-522
Gottlieb, Ernest E. 451, 477-478
Grady, Mr. _____ 435
Greenspan, Ernie 553-554
Grosset & Dunlap, Inc. 557, 560
Guerin, Arthur S. 346-347
Guild Rental Library 463-464
Gutenberg Bible 193

H

Hagen, Dick 612-613, 617
Hall, Floyd 578
Hall of Fame Bookshop 230
Halle family 18
Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, Inc. 541, 542
Hardy, Georgiana 564
Hardy, Jack 564
Harelick, M. 438-439, 440-441, 463
Harelick and Roth, Booksellers 403-404, 408, 438-439, 440-441
Harkema, Lloyd 217, 378-380
Harlem Book Company 551
Harline, Lee 482, 484
Harline, Mrs. Lee 482
Harper & Row, Publishers, Inc. 526-529, 555, 557, 559, 572
Harris, Doris, Autographs 522
Harvard University 272
Haverlin, Carl 112, 489
Healy, Ray 287-289, 535-536
Hearst, William Randolph 344, 347, 349, 350, 352
Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS) 14-15
Hellman family 41, 125, 598
Henry's Camera 164
Heritage Book Shop 519
Hewitt's Book Store 56, 229
Hiawatha (Longfellow) 66
Hill, Fred 559
Hill, Harry 427-428
Hillside Park 77
Hirsch, Berril 29
Hispano-American Book Shop 427
History of Costume (Racinet) 94
Hitler, Adolf 78, 267, 280-281, 514

Hixon, Charlie 241-242
Hoffman Buick 255
Hollander, Bea 262
Hollander and Davidson Fine Books 262-263
Hollingsworth, G.F. 522-523
Hollywood Anti-Nazi League 474
Hollywood Book Shop 117, 140, 145, 200, 201, 205, 231, 412-413, 432
Hollywood Bowl 107
Hollywood High School 273-274
Hollywood Ten 307, 470, 473-474
Hollywood Wax Museum 369
Holmes, Harold 65, 126-127, 128
Holmes, Norman C. 58, 59-61, 64-65, 96, 126-136, 148-149, 224-225, 255, 260, 296, 298, 405, 409, 463, 482, 504
Holmes Book Company, Los Angeles 51, 126-136, 238, 259-260
Holmes Book Company, San Francisco 65, 126-127
Holt, Rinehart & Winston, Inc. 538
Home of Peace Memorial Park and Mausoleum 76
Hood, Leslie 573, 594
Hoover, Herbert 365
Horan, C.F., Bookstore 231
Hotel Acacia 66
Houghton-Mifflin Company 227, 415-417, 525, 533-534
House of Whites 226-227
Howard, Miss _____ 457-460
Howell, Fran 543-544
Howes, Wright 91
Howey, Ralph 78-79, 159, 163
How to Win Friends and Influence People (Carnegie) 48
Hoyt, Larry, family 609
Hunley, Max 64, 451, 455, 477
Hunley Theatre 452
Hunt, Pat 166
Hunter's Books 156, 215, 609
Huxley, Aldous 331-334
Huxley, Julian 335
Huxley, Laura 334
Huxley, Matthew 334-335
Huxley family 334-335

I

Immaculate Heart College 337-339
Information, Please (radio program) 219
Ingraham, Mr. _____ 141
International Bookfinders 523
Intro, Sol 292
Iron Curtain over America (Beatty) 359
Isherwood, Christopher 335

J

Jamison, David 250-251
Jeffers, Robinson 246
The Californian 246-247
Jenkins, Colonel 71
Jenkins, Mr. _____ 224
Jewish American Book Shop 264, 403, 408, 433
Jewish Consumptive Relief Association of Los Angeles 76, 196, 277
Jewish Federation Council of Greater Los Angeles 75, 279
Jewish Home for the Aged 76, 277
Johannes Secundus 354
John Birch Society 357, 360-362, 470-471
Johnson, Charlie 538, 540-541
Johnson, Mrs. Charlie 540
Jones Book Stores 62-63, 116, 117, 140, 150, 152-153, 231
Jordan-Smith, Paul 118, 464
Julian, C.C. 73

K

Kahn, Alan 628-629
Kaplan, Carolyn 524
Kaspare Cohn Hospital
see Cedars-Sinai Medical Center
Kates, Arthur 49
Katzev, Johiel 48-49
Kazan, Elia 634-635
Kellogg, George 557
Kent, Rockwell 139
Klein, Keith 276
Klein, Lloyd 276
Klein, Robert 275-276
Klein, Robert, Jr. 276

Klonsky, Robert 465-468
Knight, Goodwin 472
Knopf, Alfred A., Inc. 525, 551
Kohn, Dave 121-123, 268, 433
Kohn, "Soldier Joe" 120-121
Korach Company, Chicago 35
Kosick, Helen 560, 561
Kovach, Mr. _____ 252
Kovach, Nick A. 251-252, 482, 488-491
Kubel, Phil 155
Kurman, Eleanor 469
Kurman, Stanley 469
Kuttner, Henry 226
Kuttner, Paul 225-226, 262

L

Lacey, Madison 336
Lafayette Escadrille 241
Lamport, Paul 207-208, 368-370, 424-425
Lanchester, Elsa 316
Larson, John R. 421, 497-498
Larson, Louise (Mrs. John) 421-422, 498
Larson's Bookshop 421-422, 497-498
Latting, Ben 377, 379
Laughton, Charles 315-317
Lawrence, Wes 20
Lawyer, David 238-241
Lawyer, Harry 505
Lazard family 598
Lazarus, Mr. _____ 33-34
Lee Drug Company 273
Lengfeld, Lew 609, 633
Leonard, C.C. 435
Leonard, Elliot 386, 578-579, 581, 589, 616, 620, 628
Leonard's Bookstore 117-118, 145
Leusler, Harrison 416-417, 533-534, 553
Levine, Abe 274
Levine, Mrs. Abe 274
Levine, Henry 273
Levine, Phil 273
Levinson, Harry 449-450, 455, 477
Levinson, Mrs. Harry 450
Lewis family 77
Lewis Bookstore 608

Life (periodical) 466
Lillie, Mildred L. 346-348
Lincoln, Abraham 3
Lincoln Bookshop 419-420, 467
Lippincott, J.B., Co. 538, 542, 559
Little, A.E. 138-139
Little, Brown & Co. 525
Lofland, Fred 139, 350
Lofland and Russell Bookstore 51, 58, 69, 139, 255, 350, 414, 417

London Times Literary Supplement (periodical) 89
Long Beach Book Store 51-57, 228-230, 252
Long Beach Press-Telegram (newspaper) 55
Lord, R.C. 153a, 164
Los Angeles Daily News (newspaper) 592-594
Los Angeles Examiner (newspaper) 347, 350
Los Angeles Library Association 462, 632
Los Angeles News (newspaper) 178
Los Angeles News Company 169, 552, 560, 573
Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra 410, 457-458, 460
Los Angeles Public Library 57, 109, 120, 157-158, 237

Los Angeles Times (newspaper) 69, 118, 137, 210, 215, 241, 347, 464, 549

Lovejoy, Dr. _____ 243-245
Luboviski, Milton 432, 464, 472-473, 474-476, 492, 493, 516-517

Luboviski, Mrs. Milton 473
Lyon's Storage 84

M

McCarty Company 105
McCarthy, Joseph 357
McCullough, Bill 553
MacDonald, Bob 552
McDowell, Jack 466
McGilvery, Laurence 524
McGraw-Hill Book Co. 555
MacIntyre, Carlyle 82-83
Mack family 275
McKay, David, Co., Inc. 525, 550
Macmillan Company, The 462, 525, 531-533, 578

McPherson, Aimee Semple 252

Maher, Bill 561
Mahler, Alma 320
Mandle, Sol 282
Mandle, Mrs. Sol 282
Mann, Herman 176, 345-347, 350, 375-377
Mann, Thomas 320
Markowitz, David 235-236
Markowitz, Morris 234-236, 269
Markowitz, Sarah
see Borden, Sarah
Marriner, Willard 573
Marriner's Stationers and Bookseller 573
Marshall, Richard 103-104, 124, 382-384, 400-401
Marshall Field & Company 484-485
Martindale, Etta L. (Mrs. Walter W.) 398
Marindale, Richard 230, 398
Martindale, Virginia (Mrs. Walter) 399, 400
Martindale, Walter 231, 395, 396-400, 426, 563, 573, 611, 633
Martindale, Walter W. 396-397, 398
Martindale, William 230, 398
Martindale family 396-400
Martindale's Book Stores, Inc. 215, 230, 300, 396-397, 400, 423, 426
Martindale's, William, Book Store, Santa Monica 398
Masquers 402
Maxton, Ron 234
May Company 155, 156, 202, 242, 360, 544, 549, 597, 599-600, 605, 610, 625-626
Melander, Kurt 498-499
Merriam, G. & C., Company 389, 484, 560
Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer 300
Meyer, Eldred 322-323
Miller, Jesse Ray 232-234
Miller, Joni 628
Miller, Paul Burt 234, 414
Miller's Books and Stationery 200, 205, 232-234, 414, 432
Mirsky, E. 155
Mitchell, Ed 283
Mitchell, Joe 283
Mittenthal, Joe 394
Moby Dick Book Shop 252-257, 264, 407

Modern Library (Random House) 536
Mohr, Richard 523
Mohr, Mrs. Richard 523
Morrow, William, & Co., Inc. 525, 537
Moss, Ted 561
Mottola, Jim 555
Musso & Frank Grill 171, 261, 308, 330, 448, 605

N

Nash, Charles 64, 128-129
Natick Book Store 140
National Book Award 580
National Book Week 580
National Cash Registers 102
National Geographic (periodical) 53, 148
Natural History (Pliny) 354
Needham, Ida 432, 464, 469, 472-473, 492
Needham, Wilbur 464-465, 467-470, 472
Needham Book Finders 464-465, 467-470
Neuman, Walter E. 477-478
Neville Book Company 140
Newbegin's, San Francisco 80, 202
Newmark, Harris 75
Newmark family 77, 598
New York Bookstore 234-235, 261
New York Herald Tribune (newspaper) 19
New York Times (newspaper) 19, 596
Nielsen, O.C. 263, 400
Nin, Anais 325-328, 385-386
Nixon, Richard 348-349
Noonan, Everett 564
Nourse, Floyd 550, 551, 558
Nourse, Jim 550-551
Nourse, Jim, Jr. 550, 551, 558
Novins, Roman 455, 500-501
Novins, Mrs. Roman 501
Noyes, Dick 586, 627
Noyes, Mrs. Dick 586
Nussbaum, Max 282

O

O'Connor, Bill 71
O'Connor, C.H. 71, 98-101, 110
O'Connor, Frank 71

O'Dell, Scott 592-594
O'Hara, George 561, 575-576
Ohio Jobbing Company 49
Ohio State University 32-34, 38, 39, 222
    Hillel 33
    Menorah Society 33
    Order of the Coif 39
Old Book Shop 231
O'Leary, Jack 561
Olive Street Synagogue 76
One (periodical) 457
O'Neill, Eugene 309
Open Book Shop 231
Orth, Mr. _____ 84-87
Orth Storage 84-87
Osborne's Book Store, Santa Barbara 247
Otis Art Institute 264, 404, 427
Outlet Publishing Company 553
Oxford University Press 560

P

Paddock, Paddy 571, 573
Paradise Book and Stationery Shop 427
Paramount Studios 299-300, 301, 302-304
Parker, C.C. 51, 62, 67, 116, 157, 203, 260
Pegue, Unity 118-119, 120, 145
Pelican Books 343
Penguin Books 343
Penguin Bookshop 227
People's Bookstore 467
Perkins, P.D. 460-461
Perkins, P.D. and Ione, bookstore 460-461
Phipps, Fillmore 230
Pick, Richard J. 573
Pick's Book Shop 573
Pickwick Book Shop, Hollywood 5, 37, 47-49, 55, 65, 106-107, 118, 140, 144, 146-147, 153a, 165, 172a, 174-176, 191, 194-195, 200-218, 264, 274, 287, 294-394, 409, 412, 414-417, 418, 420, 423, 424-426, 439-440, 465-468, 499-500, 519,

Pickwick Book Shop, Hollywood [cont'd] 524-561, 563, 565, 581, 587, 594-624, 625-626, 628-631, 634-635
Bakersfield 606
Carlsbad 606
Northridge 604
San Bernardino 606
San Diego (Mission Valley Center) 606-607
Topanga Plaza 597-606, 607, 608
see also B. Dalton, Bookseller
Pickwick Papers, The (Dickens) 500
Pike, Jim 550
Pináns, Juan 487
Pináns, Mrs. Juan 487
Pioneer Bookshop 261
Placht, Karl 410-411, 561, 590
Ponger, Eddie 556
Pottenger, Francis M. 46
Poulson, Norris 366
Powell, Lawrence Clark 82, 123, 250
Vroman's of Pasadena (book) 250
Powner's Bookstore 51, 58, 136-137, 206
Prentice-Hall, Inc. 552
Price, Tone 234
Pritchard, Virginia Cole 94-96
Procopius 354
Publisher's Weekly (periodical) 55, 56-57, 146, 178, 199, 574, 582
Putnam's, G.P., Sons 550

R

Rabalette News and Book Agency 422
Random House, Inc. 525, 536, 546-548, 578
Raymar Book Company 213, 542-544
Red Arrow Service 325
Reese, Mr. _____ 457-460
Reiser, Marie (Mrs. Sam) 185, 186-187, 188-191
Reiser, Sam 179-191, 195, 198, 218, 231, 261, 432
Reiser, Sam, Bookstore 189
Reiser, Samuel, Bookseller 188, 191
Republican party 362, 472
Research Magazine and Book Shop 263
Retail Clerks International Association, Local 777 466

Reynolds, Bill 559-560
Reynolds, Jack E. 450
Ripley, Elizabeth 94-95
Ritchie, Ward, Press 544
Robinson, Edward G. 172
Robinson's department store 138, 155-156, 410, 422
Rogart, Geof 628
Rogers, Warren 140-144
Rogers Book Shop 238
Roosevelt, Franklin D. 365
Rose, Mr. _____ 173-174
Rose, Stanley 153a, 166-168, 169-179, 189, 201, 205-206, 224, 257, 261, 336, 413
Rose, Mrs. Stanley 173-174, 179
Rose, Stanley, bookstore 168, 171-172a, 205-206
Ross, Lillian 179
Rossen, Charlie 282-283
Roth, Jack 438
Royer, Mel 64, 217, 442-444, 452, 477, 501-502
Rubber, Viola 305
Rubin, Mel 466
Ruby, John 263-264
Ruick, Virgil 248-250, 573
Russell, Mr. _____ 139
Russo, Tony 381-382

S

St. Vibiana's Cathedral 231
Salop, Mr. _____ 267
Salop, Max 266-267, 270
Salop, Morris 266-267, 268, 269-270
Salop, Mrs. Morris 269
Salvation Army 54, 148
Salzman, Charles 442, 491-492
Samuels, Louis 227
Saroyan, William 172
Satyr Book Shop 136-137, 153a, 166, 168, 200, 205, 206, 231, 433
Schuberg, Bill 53
Schulberg, Budd 172
Schwarz, Kurt 455-457, 524
Schwarz, Martha 456-457

Schwarz, Thomas 456
Scioscia, Frank 555, 557
Scott, Adrian 307
Scott, Lee 573
Scribner's Book Store, New York 237, 423-424
Scribner's, Charles, Sons 227, 394, 560
Scripps family 485
Sears Roebuck 594
Selznick, David O. 406
Senn, Milton 358-359
Serisawa, Nakuro 444
Severe, Gladys (Mrs. Lloyd) 402, 572
Severe, Lloyd 401, 402-403, 412, 571, 572
Shafer, Isadore 285-286
Shelton, Dickson L. 81, 165-166, 183
Shelton, Harry 573
Sheppard, Mullin, Richter, Baltnis & Hampton 466
Shorey Book Store, Seattle 447
Shuman, Bill 53, 252-257
Shuman, Mrs. Bill 256
Simon, Norton 217-218
Simon and Schuster, Inc. 536, 556-557
Sinaiko, Isaac 277, 283
Sinaiko, Joan 277
Sinaiko, Ruth 277
Singer Company, The 578
Sister Mary Faith 337
Smalley, Carl 534-535
Smith, Bertrand 446-448
Smith, Bill 394-395
Smith, Gerald L.K. 359
Smith, Harry 48, 559, 561
Smith, Olen W. 137
Smith, Ron 211-213, 545-546, 549
Smith, Roysce 581
Smith, Wilbur J. 118
Soldier Joe
see Kohn, "Soldier Joe"
Solomon, E. 407
Solomon's Hebrew and English Bookstore 407-408, 433, 438
Sorkin, Itzchak 10
Sorkin, Mrs. Itzchak 10
Sotheby Parke Bernet 632

Southern California Booksellers Association 204-205, 248-251, 402, 412, 562-573
Membership Committee 573
Publicity Committee 573
Publishers Relations Committee 573
Southern California Historical Society 451
Spanish Bookstore 444, 486-487
Sparkletts Drinking Water Corporation 460-461
Spearman's bookstore 427
Specialist, The (Sale) 167
S.S. Cedric (ship) 12
Stackhouse, Ed ("Stack") 130, 131, 176, 178, 296, 313, 336, 340, 341, 342, 374, 375, 386-387, 409, 414, 415, 416, 595, 607, 616, 619, 629
Stansberry, Ray 346-347
Stansberry, Mrs. Ray 347
Steinbeck, John 472
Steinberg, Bill 427
Stevenson, Peggy 283
Stevenson, Robert 283
Storm, John 552
Storm, Mrs. John 552
Strassberg, Max 282
Stratford and Greene bookstore 62-63, 140, 150-151, 163
Straude, Odo 117
Stravinsky, Igor 325
Stravinsky, Vera 325
Stricker, Thomas Perry 106-108, 112
Stuart, Errett 544-545, 550-551
Stuart, Jeff 545
Stuart, Terry 545
Studio Bookstore 433
Sunset News Company 48, 172a

T

Taylor, Joseph H.
Frontier and Indian Life 229-230
Technical Book Company 263, 444-445, 461
Tecolote Bookshop, Santa Barbara 87-88
Temple Beth Am 403
Temple Beth El 278
Temple Israel 77, 276-279

Temple Sinai 76
Thomas, Jessie 138
Thompson, Guy 377-378
Thor's Book and Magazine Shop 261
Todd, John W., Jr. 447
To Have and to Hold (Johnson) 496
Twentieth Century-Fox Studios 300

U

Union Bank 597-599
United Jewish Welfare Fund 78, 277, 278, 279, 282, 284-293, 514-517, 536
United States Bank 41
U.S. Constitution 193
U.S. Federal Trade Commission 568, 626
U.S. Supreme Court 348-349
University of California, Berkeley 404
University of California, Los Angeles 106, 114, 118, 195, 257, 324, 454, 463, 522, 555, 594
Special Collections, Library 118, 463
University of Oklahoma Press 535
University of Paris 454
University of Southern California 232, 324, 475

V

Valentine, John 481
Varousis, Mr. _____ 321
Ver Brugge, Josephine 265-266, 404, 501
Ver Brugge Books 404
Verne's Hollywood Book Shop 262
Viking Press 525, 545, 551
Vista Del Mar 278
Vosper, Robert 195
Vroman's bookstore 138, 210, 250-251, 401-402, 423, 542-543, 549, 563, 571-572, 573, 594

W

Wahrenbrock, Bill 254-255, 256
Walden bookstores 609, 625, 626
Walker, Max 115, 268, 457
Walker Book Shop 66

Wallace, Jim 542
Ward, Esme 145, 153a
Warner Brothers 605
Warner Brothers Records 543
Warren, Earl 364, 472
Washington Post (newspaper) 19
Watson-Guptill Publications 558
Weatherby, Allan 412-413, 414, 432
Webb, Bill 83, 557-558
Weil, Albert 71
Weinstein, Ben 519-520
Weinstein, Bob 520
Weinstein, Jerry 520
Weinstein, Louis 519-520
Weiss, Mr. _____ 225
Weiss, William 420-421
Weisz, David 168, 169
Weisz, Mrs. David 169
Weisz, Mike 168
Wepplo, Harry 139-140, 350-351, 414-417, 420
Wepplo, Harry, Bookstore 414
Werfel, Franz 320
Westerners, Los Angeles Corral 450-451, 481
Wettereau, Robert 384-386
Wettereau, Mrs. Robert 384
Wheeler, Mr. _____ 227
Wheeler, Allan H. 227
Wheeler Publishing Company 227-228
Whiffin, C.U. 102
White, Miss _____ 226-227
White, Mr. _____ 226
Whittier Book Shop 573
Wilkie, Bob 561
Williams College 240
Wilson, Edmund 344, 352
Memoirs of Hecate County 344-352, 354, 375, 414, 420
Wolfe, Thomas 172
Woodruff, Raymone (Mrs. Stu) 544
Woodruff, Stu 224, 542-544
Woodfurr Book Store 224
World Book Company 542, 555-556, 561
World Health Organization 334
World News Company 427
World Publishing Company 389
Wright, Frank Lloyd 262

Y

Yale, Bud (Charlie, Jr.) 462-463, 483
Yale, Charlie 61, 124, 461-463, 479, 483, 502, 504, 505
Ye Olde Book Shoppe, Long Beach 229
Ye Olde Book Shoppe, San Diego 253-254
Yorty, Sam 366, 369
Yost, Otis 571-572, 573
Young Men's Christian Association 179, 184

Z

Zamboni, Karl 225, 230, 482, 484
Zamboni, Mrs. Karl 482
Zeitlin, Jake 64, 81, 107, 108, 156, 162-163, 166, 245, 257-261, 262-263, 264-266, 268, 404-405, 454, 455, 480, 482, 484, 501, 504, 515, 518
Zeitlin, Edith (Mrs. Jake) 257, 259
Zeitlin, Jean (Mrs. Jake) 257
Zeitlin, Josephine Ver Brugge (Mrs. Jake) 265-266, 404, 501
Zilberstein, Oscher 24
Zweig, Arnold 320